MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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VOLUME 8

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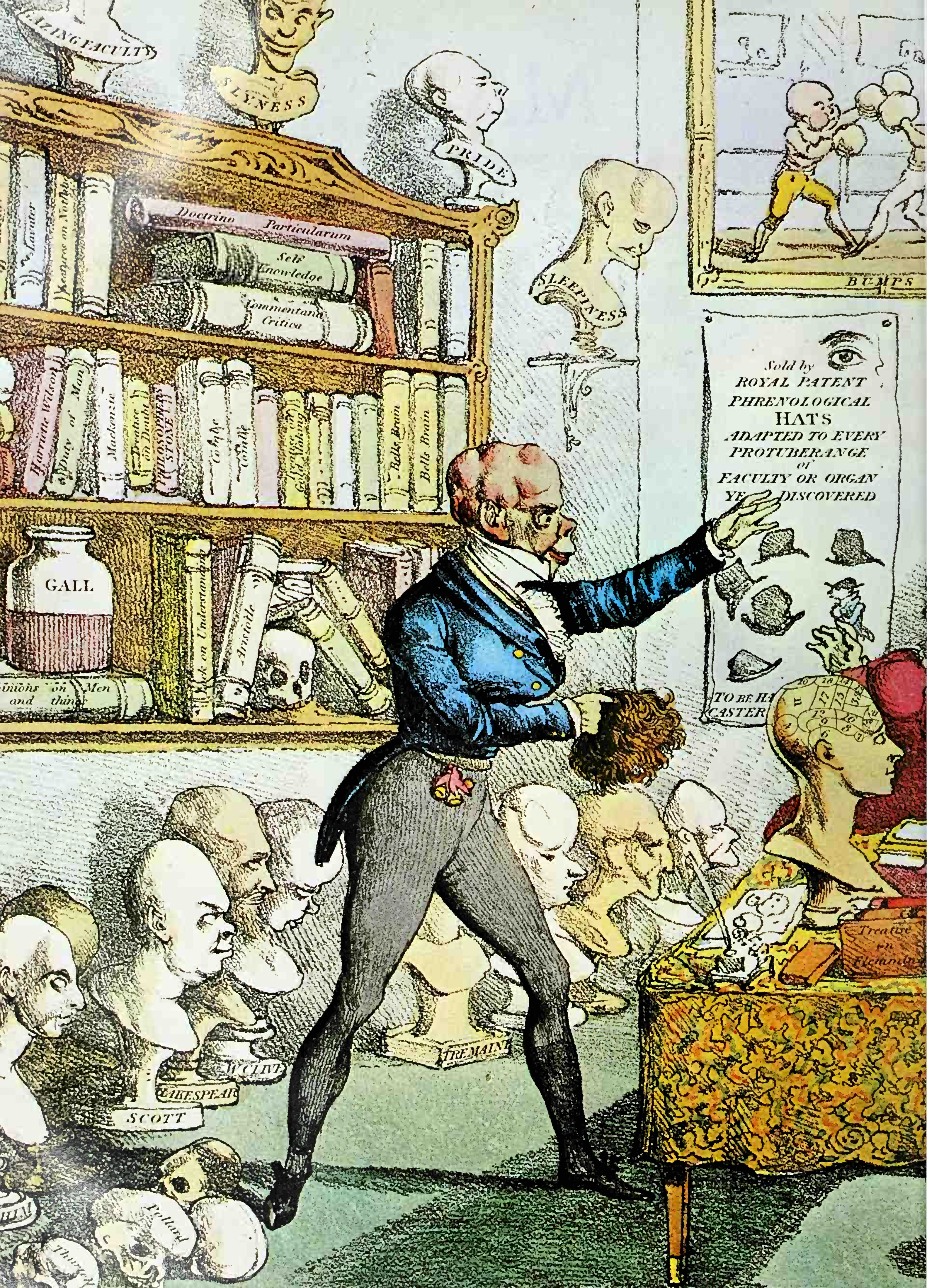
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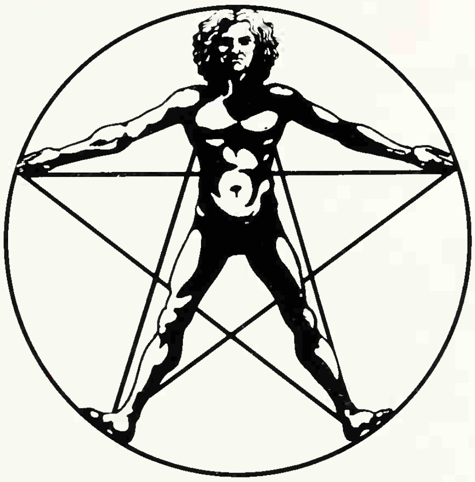

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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In general the giants of the past had a bad reputation. Greedy, boastful, brutish, with cannibalistic tendencies, their immense size and strength made them objects of terror

GIANTS

THE BELIEF in the former existence of a race of giants is world-wide. They feature in the mythologies of most peoples, in local legends and in folktales. The evidence relating to them is as complex as their appearance is ubiquitous, but from the collected mythologies of the world it is possible to trace their development. The evidence suggests that descending from their original status as 'sons of heaven', the giants finally came to feature as grisly monsters and demons.

The deepest and most ancient significance of the myth of giants lies in the cosmogonic cycles (cycles of creation myths) of many peoples. These allude to the existence of an immense primordial being who, in order to make possible the creation of the universe, and in particular of the earth, had to sacrifice himself. The first beings on this earth were creatures that manifested qualities and powers akin to those of this one mythical being.

Seen in relation to man, giants are personifications of the overwhelming manifestations of the natural universe. Similarly, on a psychological level, they may be seen to represent man collectively as a species asserting himself on this planet, or they may be regarded as symbolizing all those forces in man which he is unable to control.

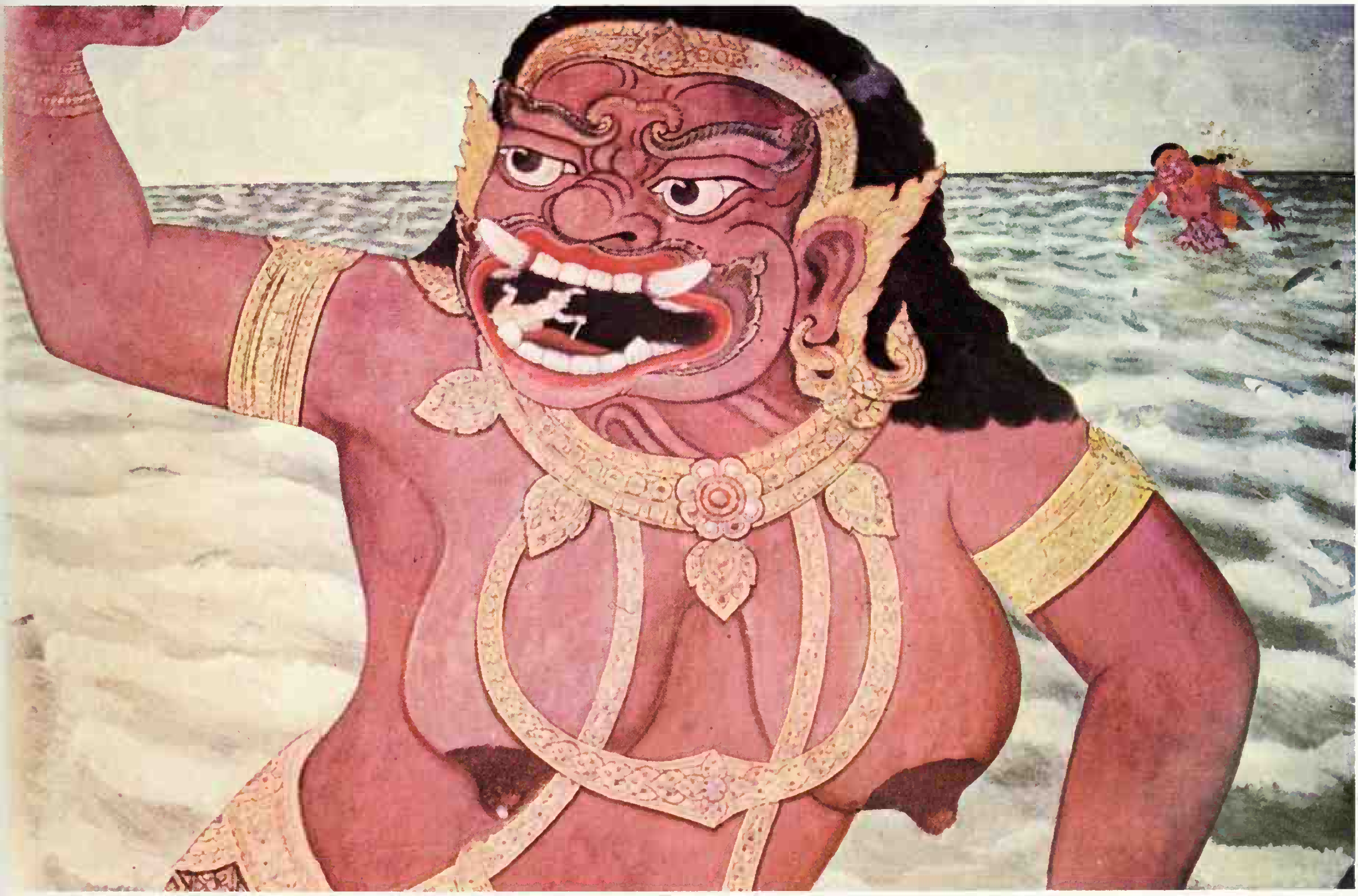
In nearly all traditions the giants appear as miraculous and ominous manifestations, that is, they represent all that surpasses human stature and achievement. But often giants exhibit inferior qualities such as stupidity and helplessness, which render them subordinate to man. According to traditions preserved in mythology and folklore, giants died out because they came into conflict with either gods or heroes. Essentially, the giant is a symbol of dissatisfaction, in that he either aims at dethroning the gods or destroying the work of man. The hero's deed is to restore the equilibrium that had been upset by the giants' overturning of the universal order.

Goliath of Gath

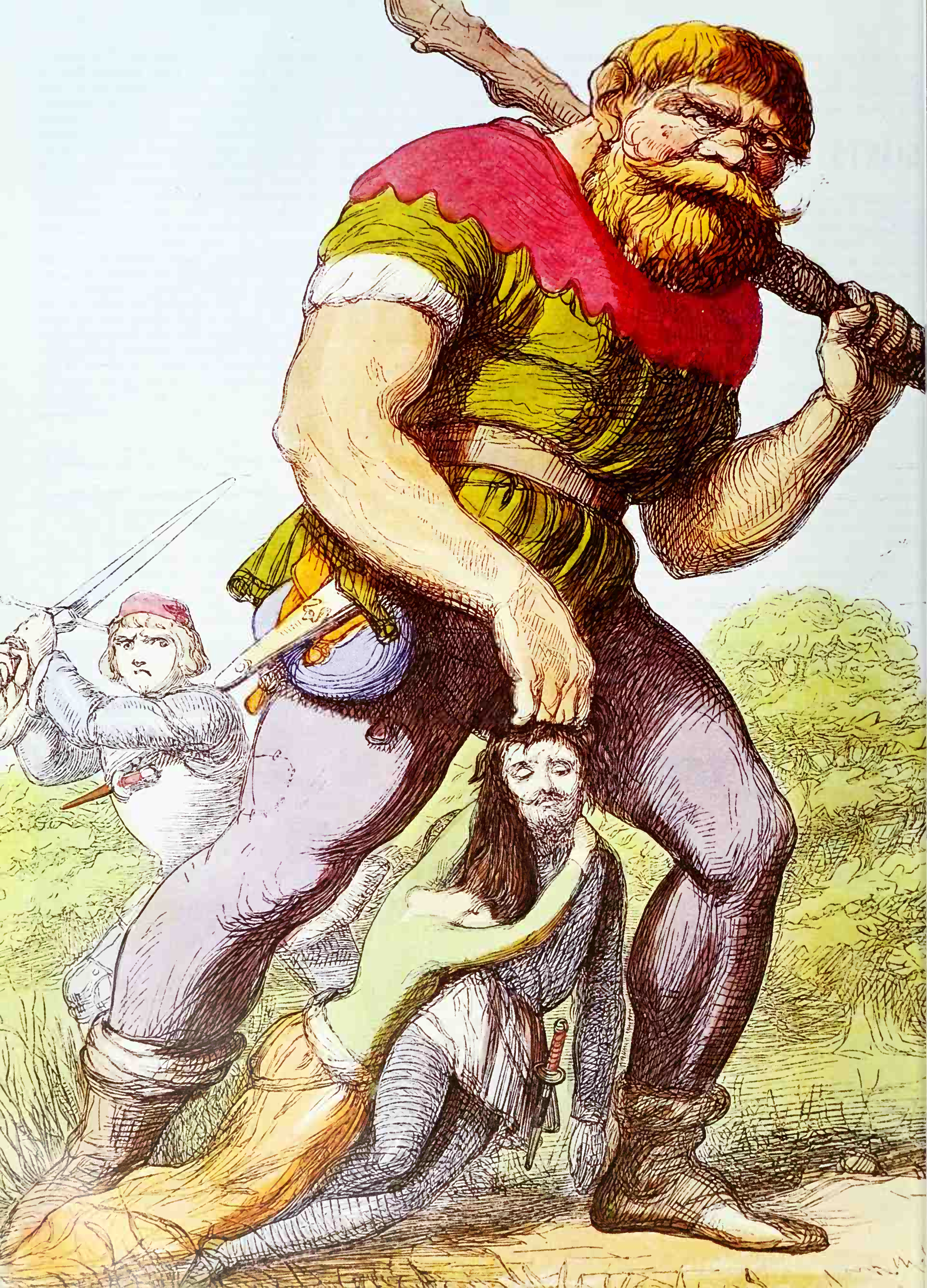
Their mythological or early legendary character is clearly in evidence in the giants mentioned in the Old Testament. Biblical sources make only very scanty reference to what was probably a much larger body of current local folklore, which entered literature more extensively in the apocryphal writings. There is a passage in Genesis chapter 6, which speaks of a race of giants that sprang from a union of angels – called the 'sons of God', the 'Watchers' of the apocryphal writings – and women or the 'daughters of men' (see DEVIL). This passage appears to be a short fragment of a myth accounting to the Hebrew mind for those giants that were already known to common folklore. The contest of the giants with God appears first in the Apocrypha (Ecclesiasticus 16.7) and is developed greatly in later writings. In the other biblical references to giants the terms Nephilim and Rephaim, among others, are used to signify a race of giants who inhabited Palestine as the predecessors of the Canaanites. 'Rephaim', incidentally, is connected with the word meaning 'shade' or 'ghost' and thus fits the mythological references to the extinct races which were supposed to have inhabited the land. In general, Hebrew legend attributes long life and abnormal stature to prehistoric races. In these ancient myths, referred to in Genesis 6. 1–4, we find the origin of the idea of angels of high estate who fell from the grace of God. This idea was perpetuated through the millennia, finding its personification later in the figure of Satan in the New Testament, as well as in the figure of the dragon. It came to be widely expressed in Christian literature, as for example in Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*.

More realistic descriptions are found in relation to the giants Og and Goliath. In

A famous Indian epic poem, the *Ramayana*, tells how a virtuous Indian prince made war on the demons who lived in Ceylon: in this illustration of a scene from the epic, a sea demoness of gigantic size swallows soldiers of the invading Indian army. Wall painting on the inner wall of a courtyard in the temple of the Emerald Buddha in Thailand



William MacQuitty



Deuteronomy chapter 3 we are told of the former: 'For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.' Of Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistines who was slain by David, it is said that his bronze coat of mail weighed 5000 shekels, which is 208 pounds; about his weapon we are told 'the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron' (approximately 25 pounds).

In Greek mythology there are various accounts of the birth and the subsequent fate of giants; always they are closely related to the pantheon of gods. Hesiod speaks of their origin in his *Theogony*, written in about the 8th century BC. Uranus (sky) begot immense beings, the Titans and the Cyclopes, with Gaia (earth) and then shut his offspring in the depths of Tartarus. But Gaia in revenge incited the Titans to attack their father. This they did, led by Uranus's youngest son Cronus. Armed with a sickle Cronus castrated his father. The Titans then released the Cyclopes from Tartarus and awarded to Cronus the sovereignty over the earth; however, no sooner did Cronus find himself in supreme command than he confined the Cyclopes again to Tartarus.

The Assault on Heaven

Another account speaks of how certain tall and terrible giants, the Gigantes, with long locks and beards and serpents for feet, plotted an assault on heaven. They were enraged because Zeus, the successor of Cronus, had confined their brothers the Titans to Tartarus. Without warning they seized rocks and firebrands and hurled them upwards from the mountain tops against Olympus, disdaining the lightning of Zeus. An oracle had declared that the gods could not conquer them except with the assistance of a mortal. The hero Hercules was called to the aid of the gods and he slew the most formidable of the giants. The remainder perished by the hands of the gods or fled. Local legend explains those places noted for volcanic eruptions, as for instance the islands of Cos and Sicily, as being the spots where the giants were buried. The Gigantomachia, or War of the Giants, is also referred to by the Roman poet Ovid at the beginning of his *Metamorphoses*.

In revenge for this destruction, Gaia lay with Tartarus and brought forth her youngest child Typhon, the largest monster ever born. 'From the thighs downward he was nothing but coiled serpents, and his arms which, when he spread them out, reached a hundred leagues in either direction, had countless serpents' heads instead of hands. His brutish ass-head touched the stars, his vast wings darkened the sun, fire flashed from his eyes, and flaming rocks hurtled from his mouth. When he came rushing towards Olympus, the gods fled in terror to Egypt, where they disguised themselves as animals.'

A giant carrying off a knight and his lady is about to be slaughtered by the intrepid Jack, a popular children's hero: from *Jack and the Giants*, illustrated by Richard Doyle

The human hero in all mythologies takes part in the battle with the giants. In his *Odyssey* Homer related how Odysseus intoxicated and outwitted the one-eyed, human-eating giant Polyphemus who lived on Sicily.

Tradition holds universally that before the close of the mythical Golden Age people had been much taller and much stronger. Survivals of such beliefs are found in the mythologies of many peoples, and references to them are frequent, especially in Inuit, North American Indian, Mexican and Persian legends and stories. All the Greek and Latin poets and historians shared the opinion that they and their contemporaries were dwarfs compared with their ancestors.

Immense Stone Figures

The fact that ancient peoples have possessed a belief in giants is further evinced by the vast images of their gods and their colossal monuments in sculpture and architecture. Examples of such edifices and statues abound and survive from civilizations all over the world. The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the world, exemplifies the ancient taste for the vast human figure. Grecian temples in general portray the gods and goddesses as being of superhuman size.

In front of the portals of the palace at Karnak in Egypt are placed gigantic human statues, and in one of the courts there are erected 12 immense stone figures, each of a height of about 52 feet. Similarly, at the outer gate of the Temple of Longevity at Canton were four gigantic figures. Many more examples of this kind could be cited. The various ancient representations of huge human forms were the corporeal shapes of those gigantic mythical figures which still existed in the imagination of our ancestors and which, having been perpetuated in this way in stone, served to continue the early belief in giants.

Norse and Germanic mythology assign an important place to giants. Our knowledge of northern mythology is derived mostly from the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, which he wrote in the 13th century. The Icelandic scholar relates in it that according to Norse mythology there were in the beginning two regions: the South, full of brightness and fire, and the North, a world of snow and ice. Between them there stretched a great void. When the heat and the cold met in the midst of this expanse, a living creature appeared in the melting ice: he was Ymir, a great giant. From under his left arm grew the first man and woman, while from his legs the clan of frost giants was begotten. Ymir was thus the ancestor of all the giants. When he was slain the earth formed under his body. There is also mention in Nordic creation legends of the giant Bergelmir who escaped in his boat from the flood caused by the blood of Ymir which overwhelmed the world. Having escaped he then founded a new race.

Subsequently the giants of the *Edda* feature either as companions of the gods or as their adversaries, as in the following account. One day the god Thor and Loki, a giant's son, set out to the land of giants. Towards evening they came to a huge building with an opening to one side. They groped their way in and spent the night there. But as there was a deafening noise coming from outside, and as the building shook with a continuous earthquake, they sat up most of the night in terror. At daybreak they discovered that not far from this building there lay a giant. He was Skrymir, who when he rose picked up what Thor and Loki had taken for a building, but which was in fact his glove. The passage in which they had spent the night proved to be its thumb.

The giants slain by Thor are characterized by their enormous size, power and greed and by being particularly jealous of the possessions of the gods. Gods and giants intermarry. Born from such a union was Loki, who was handsome to look at but was evil in his ways. He was a cunning schemer who both helped and hindered the gods in their work. He was the father of the wolf Fenris, the World Serpent, and Hel, the ruler of death.

Legends universally ascribe the numerous stone structures of a former age to the work of giants. These stone structures are found particularly in Palestine, Greece and Central Europe, and are almost exclusively associated with buildings known as cyclopean. Apart from these edifices there are very numerous megalithic structures, both above and below ground. These cairns, heaps of stones akin to dolmens, known as *Riesengraber* in Germany, are found throughout Europe.

Local legend frequently pictures giants as throwing rocks about by way of trying each others' strength. According to a Dorsetshire legend, two giants once stood on a hill contending as to which of them could hurl a rock the longer distance across the valley to another hill. He whose stone fell short was so mortified by his failure that he died of vexation; he was buried beneath the mound which has since been known as the Giant's Grave. Similar legends are often attached to blocks of stone which occur naturally, and which appear strewn about, as it were, by some giants in an antediluvian game.

Gog and Magog

Giants are frequently connected with old mythic histories of the foundation of cities. Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c 1135) recounts the fate of Gog and Magog, the only survivors of a race of giants inhabiting Britain who had been slain by Brutus, legendary founder of the British race, and his companions. Gog and Magog were brought to the newly founded city of London, where they were compelled to officiate as porters at the gate of the royal palace.

Finds of huge skeletons and bones all over the world have frequently led to the belief in a former gigantic tribe of men. Pliny relates that in the time of Claudius Caesar there was a man named Gabbaras, brought by the emperor from Arabia to Rome, who was nine feet nine inches high, 'the tallest man that has been seen in our times'. The Emperor Maximus, so the story goes, was about eight or nine feet tall and of great bulk. He was in the habit of using his wife's bracelet for a thumb-ring. His shoe was a foot longer than that of any other man and his strength was so great that he was able to draw a carriage which two oxen could not move. He could strike out a horse's teeth with one blow of his fist and break its thigh with a kick. He generally ate 40 pounds of meat every day and drank six gallons of wine.

Such gigantic people have been a great attraction in popular entertainment at all times. In the 1720s there appeared the following description of a human giantess in a London handbill: 'Advertisement. This is to give notice to all gentlemen and others, that there is lately arrived from Italy, a tall woman, being above seven foot high, and every way proportionable, weighing four hundred and twenty-five pounds weight. She has been shown before the Emperor of Germany, as also to the grand Czar of Muscovy, to the wonderful admiration and satisfaction of him, and the rest of the great princes of Christendom. She is to be seen every day from ten in the morning till seven at night (without any loss of time) at the Blue Boar and the Green Tree in Fleet Street, next door where the Great Elephant is to be seen. *Vivat Rex.*'

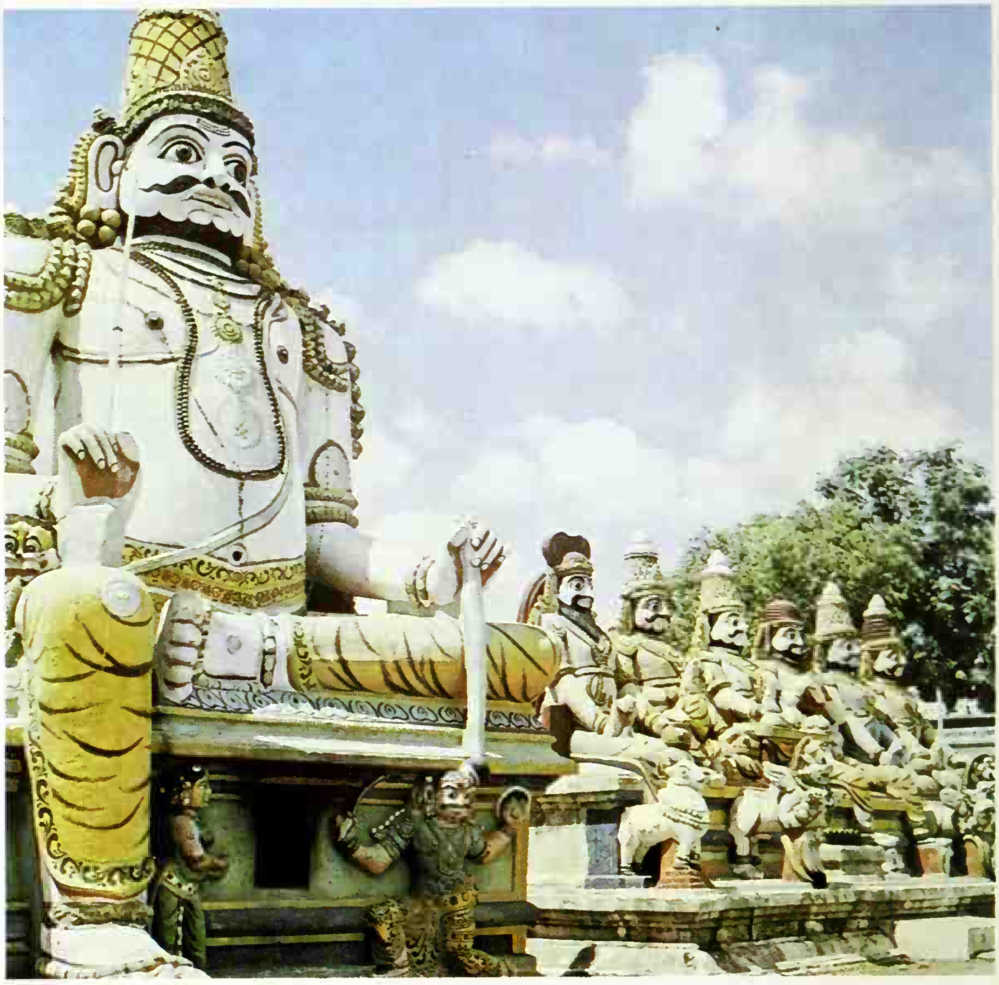
Folk tradition uses the term giant in connection with a supposed race of mortals of immense size who inhabited the world in early times. In most European folktales giants appear as cruel and stupid savages, often one-eyed and given to cannibalism; sometimes they are akin to monsters. The hero of the follktale, like the English Jack the Giant-killer and Grimm's Valiant Tailor, always emerges victorious from a battle with them. Kindly giants occur only in a few stories, as in the legends of Rubezahl, the giant of the Bohemian forest. The majority of them, however, were feared and hated, although marriage between their daughters and the hero of the story was not impossible. Jonathan Swift invented a race of benevolent giants in the second part of his satire *Gulliver's Travels.*

The figure of the superman in the ancient myths, legends and tales speaks of man's inherent tendency to magnify real occurrences, to idealize them and present them in the imagery of dreams. The human hero is a being of more than life-size ability and physique, who is presented as conquering giants, demons and dragons; thus the giants gradually come to embody almost exclusively negative qualities.

Man's love-hate relationship with the abnormal and the extraordinary, the violent idealization or rejection of the giant-hero, is apparent too in contemporary myth-making. The giant and the hero overlap. The negative giant, the master villain and the hero's enemy, embodies those qualities that are rejected by the current code of values or the ideology of a given community. The hero-giants may be cosmonauts, secret agents, political figures or other popular heroes always winning against odds and excelling in power and intelligence. (See also CREATION MYTHS; CRONUS; JACK; LOKI.)

MARIA-GABRIELE WOSIEN

FURTHER READING: M. Grumley, *There Are Giants in the Earth* (Doubleday, 1974); R. Norvill, *Giants* (Aquarian Press, 1979).



Camera Press London

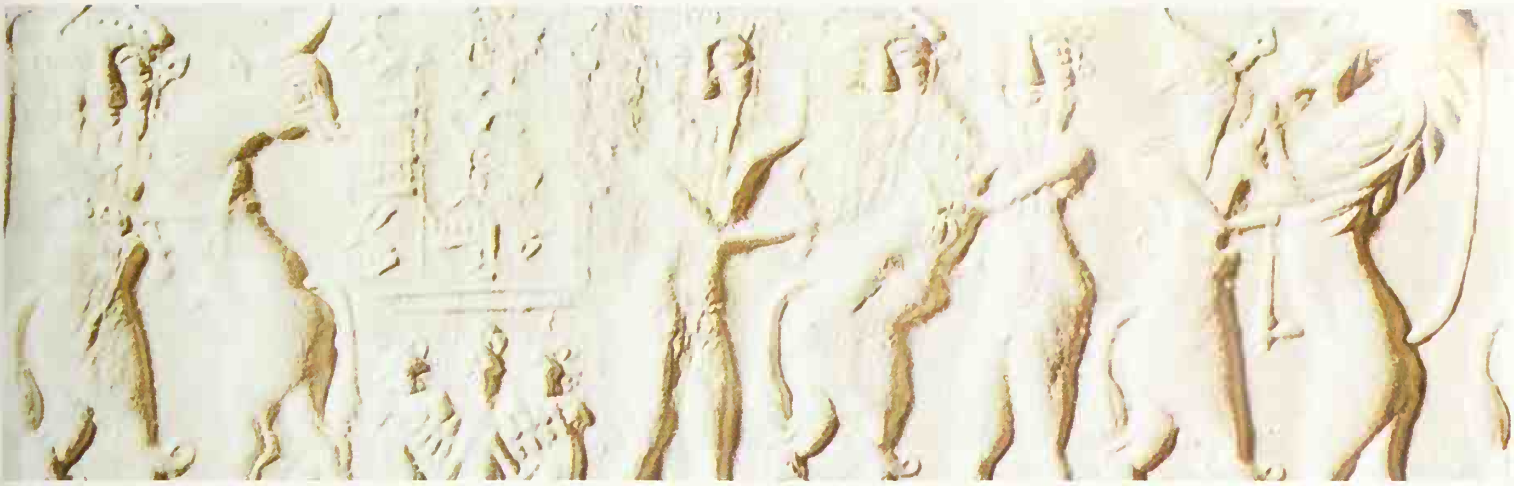
Buildings and statues of colossal size have often been attributed to giants in later ages, while human heroes have been represented in giant proportions to emphasize their superhuman qualities: at Tirumaliaiyaval in India seven wise men guard a temple courtyard

GILGAMESH

THE GREAT HERO of Sumerian and Babylonian mythology was Gilgamesh. His deeds are recorded in an epic poem no less adventurous than the *Odyssey*, put into its final written form not more than about a century after the Greek poem. The received text of the Gilgamesh epic was written down on a series of 12 clay tablets inscribed in the cuneiform script used by the Sumerians, the Babylonians and the peoples of Assyria. The fullest version that has come down to us was originally held in the great palace library of the king of Assyria, Ashurbanipal, who made a vast collection of contemporary and ancient texts in the course of three decades between about 660-630 BC.

This famous epic became a set book in the scribal schools and has been reconstituted from fragments found not only on many Mesopotamian sites, but also at places as far apart as Megiddo in Palestine and Ugarit in Syria. Evidence of the poem has been found at Sultantepe and Boghaz Koi, the great Hittite capital in Asia Minor. The Assyrian version ultimately derives from a much older Babylonian text which must have been composed before 1800 BC, for there is no mention of Marduk the god of Babylon, whose cult became the state religion in the reign of Hammurabi. But the earliest versions of all stem from Sumerian texts of the late third millennium BC, at which time this epic was perhaps not a continuous story, but consisted of a disconnected series of episodes in which Gilgamesh took a prominent place.

The epic itself is enthralling for the insight which it gives into the psychology of the Babylonians and their Sumerian forebears. We also become aware of the historical background and of a heroic age which, though associated with stories about the gods, may be authenticated by historical, or semi-historical, literature such as the Sumerian king lists, and by archeology. The historical position of Gilgamesh is firmly established by an episode in the Sumerian version of the story, which tells of a battle between Gilgamesh and Agga, King of Kish, a name already known from the Sumerian king lists. Indeed the name of Agga's father



Michael Holford

has been identified on an alabaster bowl from the Diyala valley, dated about 2700 BC. Thus in the epic we can visualize a real king, Gilgamesh, as well as a world famous historical event, the Sumerian Deluge, the memory of which has been preserved in the book of Genesis.

From this poem we learn that Gilgamesh was a renowned and powerful king who had built the great walls of Erech, one of the most extensive cities of Sumer and Babylonia. Gilgamesh, however, was an arrogant, oppressive and philandering ruler who had exasperated his subjects. In consequence an appeal was made to the gods for a champion who would contend for their rights against the omniscient and headstrong oppressor within their city.

The Hairy Hunter

The champion elected to liberate Erech was a hairy hunter named Enkidu, a Sumerian wild man who lived with the animals and protected them. He was seduced by a courtesan, who tempted him with the delights of the city, and Enkidu who had never before partaken of bread developed a taste for strong drink also. On entering Erech he engaged in a wrestling match with Gilgamesh, but after honour was satisfied on both sides the two heroes became firm friends and decided to embark on an adventurous journey together.

In a mountain of cedars, perhaps the Amanus or the Lebanon, they sought out the demon Humbaba and slew him. In this episode we may see a relic of early dynastic Sumerian conquests in Syria recently attested by excavations at Mardikh and Chuera. The two friends returned in triumph to Erech, and the goddess Ishtar became enamoured of Gilgamesh. Unwisely he spurned her advances and accused her of having seduced men and beasts. The goddess, a woman scorned and enraged, induced the high god Anu to send down from heaven an avenging bull to trample on the city of Erech, but Enkidu killed it, thereby sealing his own doom and initiating a long drawn tragedy. After his death, which was foretold in a dream, there follows a lament for Enkidu, for whom an expensive funeral is arranged.

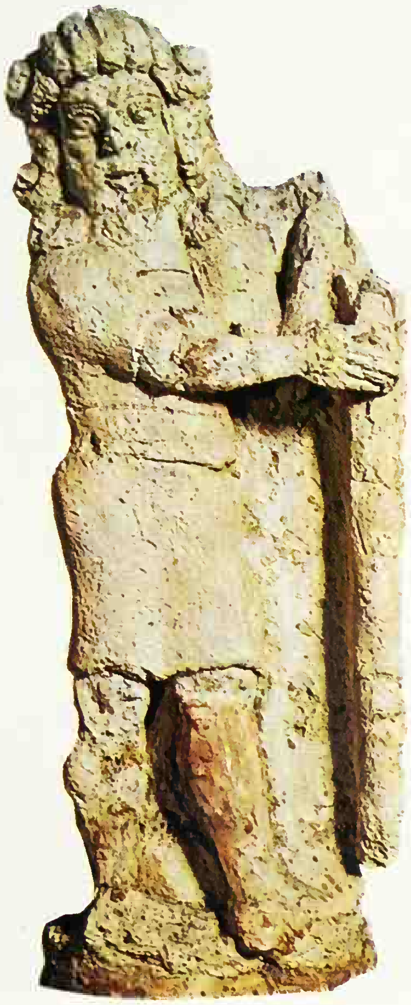
Gilgamesh, bereft of his friend, began to fear for his own life, and resolved to embark on a journey in search of the secret of immortality, although as we are reminded in the ninth tablet of the epic, 'two thirds of him is god, one third is man'. Between twin mountain peaks he penetrated the gate of sunrise which was guarded by the scorpion-man and his wife, and after a long journey through an immense and impenetrable darkness arrived in a garden where the trees bore carnelian and lapis lazuli. He was on his way to find Utnapishtim, the Sumerian Noah who, as he hoped, would reveal the secret of his immortality to him. The sun god warned Gilgamesh that he was on a vain quest and advised him to seek what pleasure he could in life:

> Day and night be thou merry
> Make every day a day of rejoicing.

This part of the narration in Tablet X concludes with a passage worthy of the book of Proverbs in which Gilgamesh reflects on the impermanence of life and its mutability.

The ensuing Tablet XI is the famous Deluge tablet, which breaks the thread of the narrative. This is thought by many authorities to reflect an identifiable event or events which, according to another Sumerian tablet, may be related to the reign of king Ziusudra who is thought to have lived not more than a century or two after 3000 BC.

Above Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu subduing wild beasts: plaster cast of an Akkadian seal **Below** Terracotta figure of Gilgamesh from Khorsabad, Iraq



Michael Holford

Robbed by a Serpent

The conclusion of the eleventh tablet is that with the advice of a ferryman named Urshanabi, Gilgamesh, his feet weighted by stones, dived deep into the sea and discovered a plant like a thorn, the wondrous plant whose name was perpetual youth. His triumph was short lived, for on his way home, whilst refreshing himself in a pool, a serpent robbed him of his trophy and stole the secret of eternal life.

The last tablet of the series, Tablet XII, is an appendix to the whole, for in it Enkidu lives once more. It contains a Semitic version of a Sumerian story. Here we have a remarkable episode concerning a willow tree and its magical properties coveted by Inanna, queen of heaven. Enkidu, who has meddled dangerously on her behalf, goes to his death, and the story ends with an interview between Gilgamesh and Enkidu's ghost, who gives a woeful account of the underworld. Here we have an unrelieved picture of gloom which, with few exceptions, is typical of Sumerian and Babylonian thought.
(See also FLOOD.)

M. E. L. MALLOWAN

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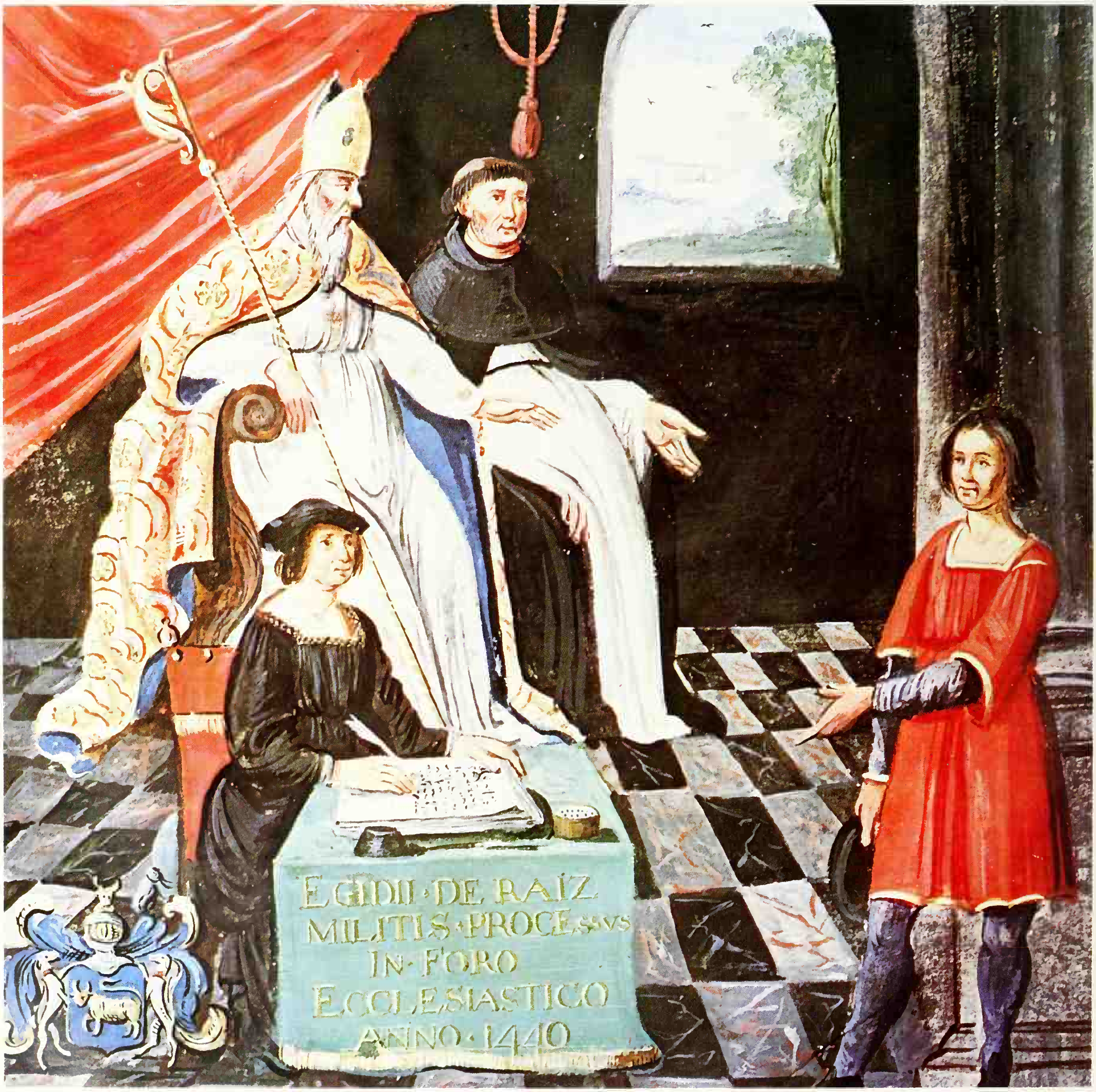
GILLES DE RAIS

THE LIFE of Gilles de Rais, culminating in his trial and execution, presents an incredible study of a dual personality. To the outside world he was cultured and artistic, interested in drama and music and skilled at ornamenting manuscripts. Though he lived like an emperor surrounded by magnificent luxury, he was a brave soldier, and his worst failings appeared to be pride, hot temper and extravagance.

However, at the trial in 1440 a ghastly side of de Rais' character emerged. It seemed his inordinate public piety and liberal acts of charity had been zealously exercised to save him from damnation, while privately he practised the most diabolical and bloody rites. The charges of the ecclesiastical court and Inquisitor included heresy, apostasy, conjuration of demons, sodomy, sacrilege and reading forbidden works on magic. The civil court arraigned him for about 140 child murders. Evidence supporting these charges must be some of the most obscene and cruel on record. It describes monstrous sexual perversions using living and dead children, specially procured for their beauty. De Rais was said to have voluptuously kissed and gloated over the loveliest corpses, which were then burned or hurled into cesspits.

It is hardly surprising that the far older Breton legend of Bluebeard became interwoven in many minds with the deeds of Gilles de Rais, though there seems little foundation for assuming him to be the archetype of that character.

Born in 1404, Gilles de Laval, Baron de Rais (or Retz) was heir to riches and great estates in Brittany. During his solitary childhood he was treated as a prince. He grew up wild and headstrong, spending much time reading about the depravities of the Caesars in his vast library of Latin manuscripts. Unaccustomed to female company, his sensual appetites found outlet in homosexual pleasure.



Jean de Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes and the Inquisitor, Jean Blouyn hear evidence at the trial of Gilles de Rais in 1440: 15th century French manuscript

Bibliothèque Nationale Paris/Snark

The Baron's wealth was further increased by an early marriage to the great heiress Catherine de Thouars. This union was not happy, but it made him one of the greatest nobles in Europe. When he was only 16, his skill and courage during a campaign won him the particular interest of his overlord, the Duke of Brittany. Six years later de Rais entered the service of Charles VII, maintaining a large troop at his own expense. He fought courageously against the English and was entrusted with watching over Joan of Arc, fighting at her side outside Paris.

Profligate Spending

During Charles's coronation at Reims in 1429, Gilles de Rais, aged 25, was created a marshal of France. Abruptly in 1432 he retired from active life, and then commenced his grisly career. De Rais was surrounded by hangers-on, like Roger de Briqueville and Gilles de Sillé, who became his intimate confidants. Availing themselves of his munificent hospitality, these parasites inexpertly managed his affairs. Wherever he went excitement and envy were aroused. Ugly rumours began to circulate around his estates of Machecoul, Malemort, La Suze, Champtocé and Tiffauges: two women in the Baron's employ, Etiennette Blanchu and La Meffraye, were said to lure into his castles beautiful children who never returned. As de Rais was virtually omnipotent in his own domains, it was impossible to level any unconfirmed accusations at him.

In time his profligate spending forced de Rais to begin selling up his lands. In 1436 his alarmed relatives succeeded in getting the King to make an order preventing further disposal of the estates. The decree was observed everywhere except within Brittany, where Duke Jean and his chancellor, Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes, were busy purchasing the Marshal's lands, on which there was a redeemable period of six years.

To gain the wealth he needed for his projects, and also because alchemy was his serious interest, de Rais sought the Philosophers' Stone, which would transmute base metals into gold (see PHILOSOPHERS' STONE); to this end he lavished further money on all those who promised to help him. A Florentine priest, Francesco Prelati, joined the other magicians. De Rais evidently believed in and liked this utterly unscrupulous charlatan. Prelati claimed he invoked when alone a demon called Baron, who would grant gold if the right sacrifices were made. Numerous terrifying ceremonies took place. Once de Rais placed a child's heart, eyes, hand and blood in a glass container for Prelati to offer. The rite was a failure: 'Baron' refused the offering, which was then buried in consecrated ground. Though the Marshal acquired a reputation for using countless bodies of children to summon demons, this was the only real case cited at the trial.

Both duke and bishop were anxious to remove de Rais because of the redemption clause, and also to gain further land, but it was difficult to destroy a man in the Marshal's exalted position. However, the ungoverned temper of de Rais played into their waiting hands. One of his castles, St Etienne Malemort, was purchased in July 1440 by Geoffroi Le Ferron, the Duke's treasurer. His brother, a priest, Jean Le Ferron, went to collect the title deeds. A quarrel arose. Le Ferron was chased from a church and then beaten and imprisoned by de Rais. By so doing the Baron committed sacrilege and violated clerical immunity.

Brought to Trial

At the end of July Malestroit began collecting evidence against de Rais, concerning the disappearance of children and matters of a heretical nature. The case of Jean Le Ferron gave him the opportunity to bring the Marshal to trial, and the Inquisitor, Jean Blouyn, presented a charge of heresy. At the same time Duke Jean arranged for a civil trial in the ducal court under the presiding judge, Pierre de l'Hôpital, President of the Breton parliament, to hear evidence about the missing children.

If de Rais was declared a heretic, then duke, bishop and inquisitor stood to gain, for all his property would be legally forfeit. A fortnight before the trial opened Duke Jean sold his anticipated share in the estate, which strongly suggests that Gilles de Rais could not be allowed to go free. Rumours spread. De Briqueville and de Sillé fled.

On 19 September Gilles de Rais was summoned to appear in court. His servants and agents, including Prelati, were arrested and taken to Nantes. The remains of one body were discovered at Machecoul. The preliminary proceedings elicited little public outcry, but by the hearing on [illegible] October crowds of bereaved parents were clamouring for justice; popular opinion had been skilfully incensed.

The civil and ecclesiastical trials ran concurrently. After torture the Baron's associates, including the two women procurers, gave evidence against him and in minute detail Prelati described the attempts at necromancy. De Rais' two personal attendants, known as Henriet and Poitou, gave evidence before both courts. On 21 October de Rais was tortured until he promised to confess 'voluntarily and freely' before Pierre de l'Hôpital and the bishops. He admitted all the charges. Prelati was called; each confirmed the other's statements and the two men parted with tearful affection. On 22 October the proud Baron asked leave to confess publicly, adding further detail, piling horror upon horror, as if he believed this act of abject humiliation would help him obtain God's pardon. Then he begged forgiveness of the bereaved parents and commanded all those present to love and honour God and the Church. The Bishop embraced him and prayed he might be purged and redeemed.

On 25 October de Rais was brought for sentence before the ecclesiastical court. No sentence was passed but he was excommunicated for heresy, which grieved him deeply. The civil court condemned Henriet and Poitou to be hanged and burned. In return for not recanting his confession Gilles de Rais was granted the unusual mercy of complete strangulation before burning. In Nantes on 26 October, after prayer and penitence, the Marshal and his two servants went to their execution followed by a procession of clergy and populace singing and praying for Gilles de Rais' salvation.

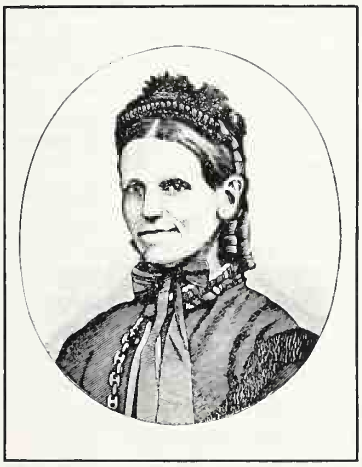
Undoubtedly Gilles de Rais must have been guilty of some of the crimes. However, the many irregularities surrounding his trial suggest at best a mystery, at worst a conspiracy. Much of the evidence was hearsay. Only two accomplices were executed; other associates, whose testimonies against de Rais contained damning confessions of their own terrible guilt, were freed. Despite his acts of necromancy, which was regarded as a grave offence, even Prelati went unpunished.

SANDY SHULMAN

Girlingites

Or Bible Christians, Children of God or English Shakers; a 19th century ecstatic sect, followers of Mary Anne Girling, who styled herself 'Bride of Christ'; they believed that if they remained celibate they would never die; at their meetings they danced and jumped up and down, and as a result were commonly known as Walworth Jumpers.

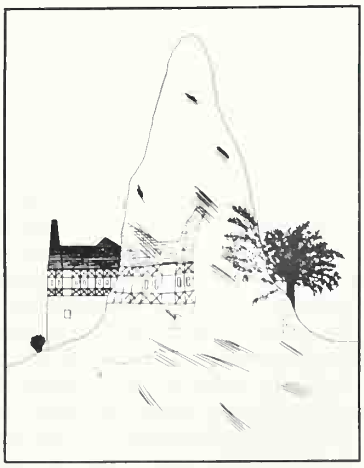
See WALWORTH JUMPERS.



John Montgomery

Glass Mountain

In European legends and folktales, a mountain of glass inhabited by supernatural beings at the end of the world, on the borders of the otherworld; probably originally the home of the dead, and possibly thought to be made of amber.



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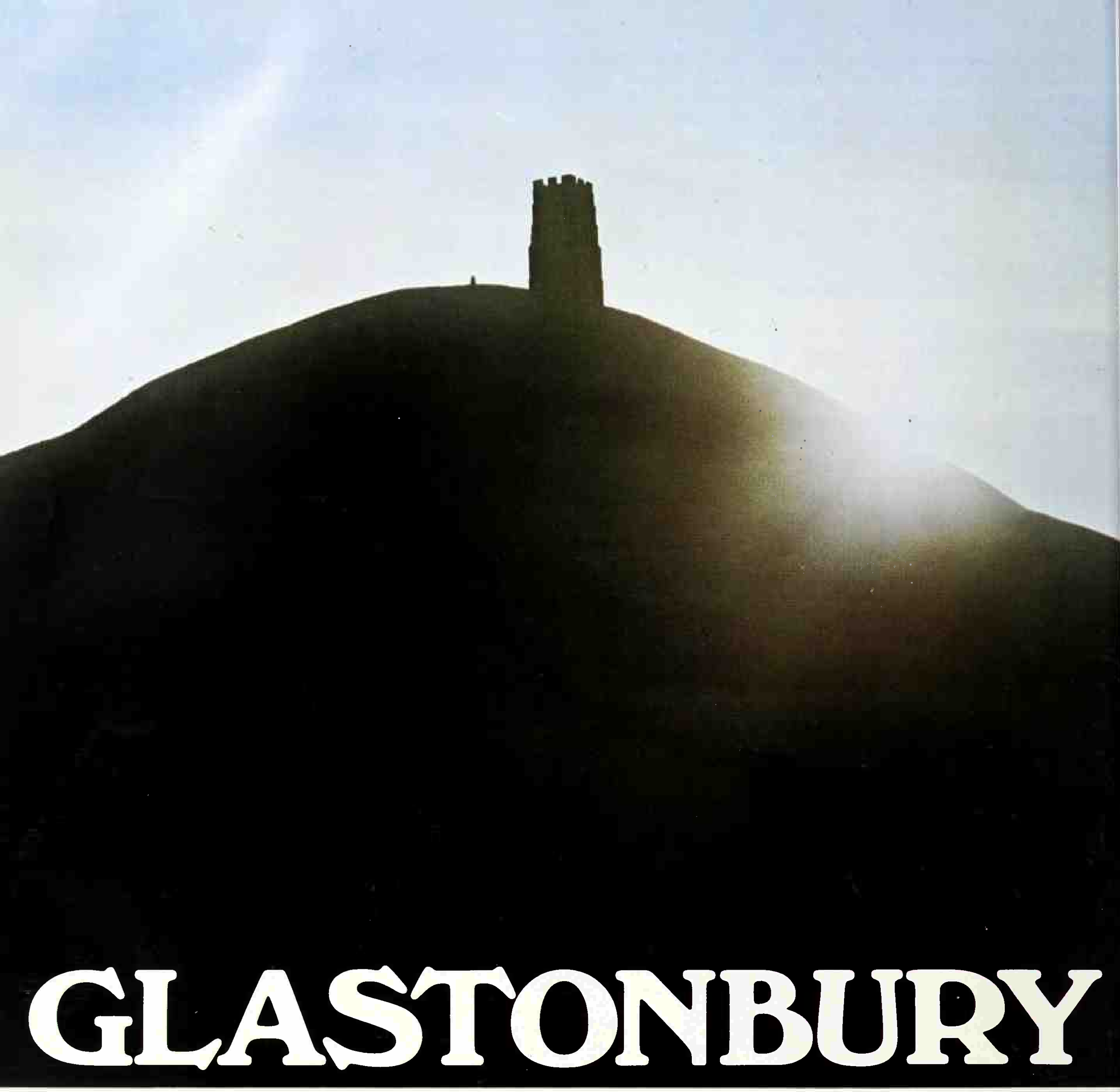


GLASTONBURY

Nicholas Barrington

An island with a hill on it was well qualified to possess a sacred aura for the Celts. A Welsh legend preserves the belief that Glastonbury Tor was an entrance to the otherworld, and the chapel on top of the hill was dedicated to St Michael, the vanquisher of evil powers

Built on the site of the ancient Isle of Avalon, Glastonbury is reputed to be not only the first Christian foundation in Britain but the last resting place of King Arthur

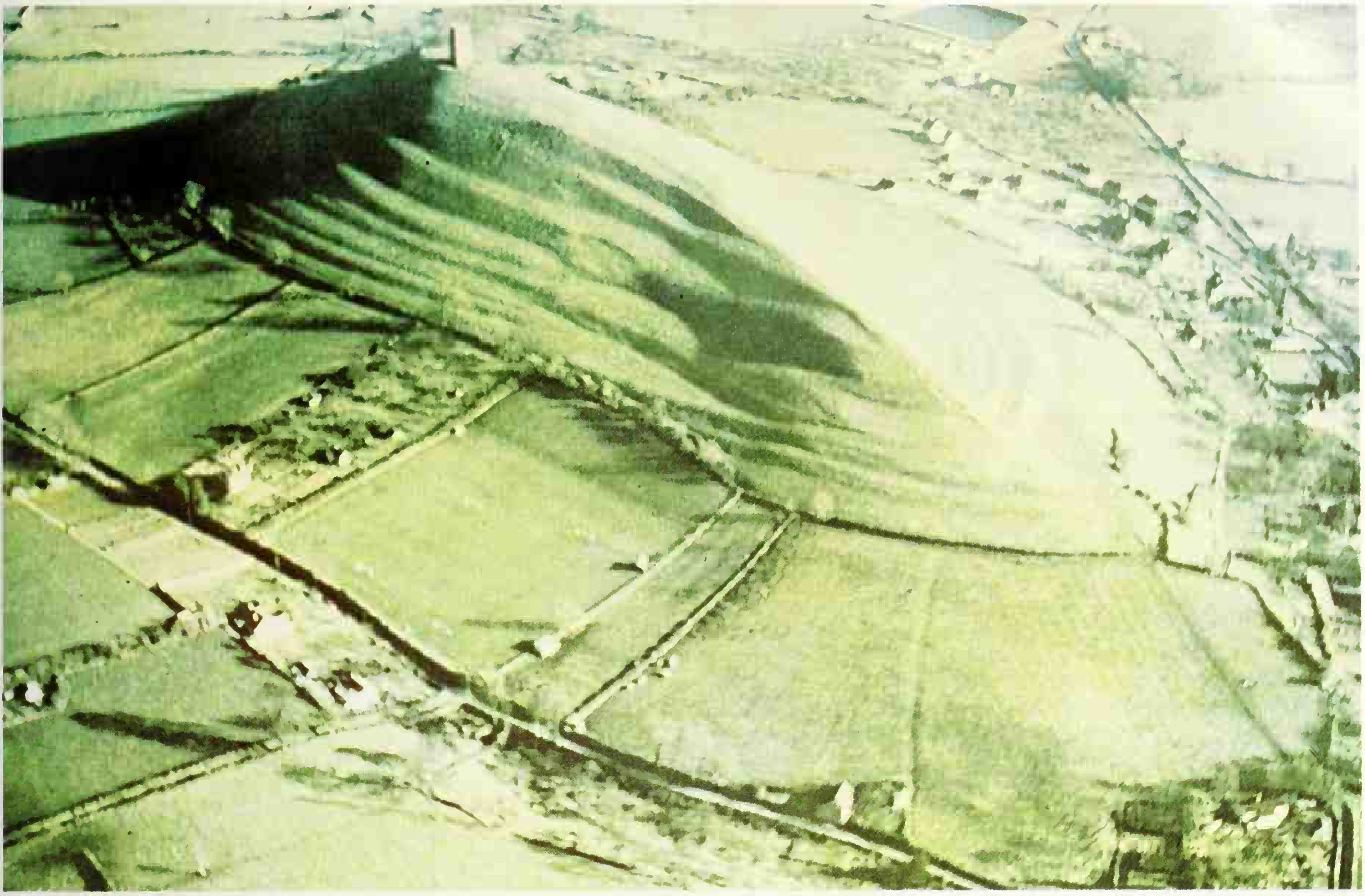
THE SMALL TOWN of Glastonbury in Somerset, famed for its ruined Abbey, is dominated by the Tor, a hill rising about 500 feet above sea level and commanding a wide expanse of low-lying country. The abbey is the centre of a vast complex of legends as it is traditionally the oldest Christian foundation in Britain, and in some sense a repository of pre-Christian mysteries.

At the start of the Christian era, Glastonbury was virtually an island encircled by lagoons and rivers. To the British Celts it was a place of great religious awe, the enchanted Isle of Avalon, consecrated to the shades of the dead. An alternative name for it was Ynys-witrin, the Isle of Glass and 'Glastonbury' is a corrupt Anglo-Saxon rendering of this.

The legend recounts how in the 1st century AD Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who buried Christ, brought the Holy Grail to Avalon. In obedience to a vision, he and his companions built a wattle chapel, the 'Old Church'; this was still standing in the early Middle Ages, dedicated to the Virgin and deeply venerated.

By the 5th century, Christian hermits were living on the spot and worshipping in the Old Church and St Patrick reorganized the little community and gave it a monastic rule. King Arthur, after receiving mortal wounds in his famous last battle, was reputedly buried in the Abbey graveyard.

When the Saxon conquerors took Glastonbury they were no longer heathens themselves: hence, this is the one place in Britain with Christian continuity stretching backward without a break to King Arthur, to the Romans, in fact to the apostolic age. It is a national shrine, with a spiritual character which has always set Britain apart from the rest of Christendom.



Philip Rahtz

Aerial view of Glastonbury, in legend and perhaps in reality the site of the oldest Christian foundation in Britain. To the Celts it was the enchanted Isle of Avalon, the home of the dead. It has been suggested that the corrugations round the Tor may be the remains of a ritual maze

Lake Isle of Avalon

The etymology of the place-names – 'Glastonbury' itself, 'Ynys-witrin,' and 'Avalon' – is confused. The 'glass' motif recalls the magical and otherworldly connotations of glass in Celtic myth, but it is very probably a mistake. Ynys-witrin could mean 'island of glass,' but both this name and Glastonbury can be derived from Celtic words meaning 'woad'. A Celtic legendary figure named Glast has also been cited. It is sometimes claimed that Ynys-witrin is not the old British name at all, but a false translation of the Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury. Against this view there is the evidence of a charter – though a poorly authenticated one – that the area was already called Ynys-witrin in 601 AD, before the Saxon conquest of central Somerset and thus before the name Glastonbury came into use. The most that can be said safely is that both names go back to Celtic roots, although 'bury' is Anglo-Saxon.

As for Avalon, this is usually construed as the 'place of apples' like the Garden of Hesperides; the Irish Celts had a mythical Isle of the Blest which was so called. It suggests a hazy idea of pre-Christian Glastonbury as a pagan holy place in the midst of water and indeed most of the region used to be subject to flooding, with permanent lagoons. Massive drainage was carried out by the Abbey during the Middle Ages, but 17th century maps still show a fair-sized lake called Meare Pool. Somerset itself got its name, the 'Summer Land,' because it was a seasonal area. The dwellers on neighbouring high ground formerly drove their animals down to pasture when the summer sun made the meadows drier and more accessible. Geology indicates that before the drainage, and especially in the late Roman and Dark Age periods, Glastonbury Tor with its satellite hills must often have been nearly cut off.

In the light of Celtic mythical concepts, we can say that an island with a hill on it was well qualified to possess a special, sacred aura. The evidence that this one actually did is sketchy and conjectural. As no lake-village burials have ever been found, some archeologists have suggested that the burial site was on the island. The earthwork of Ponter's Ball, to the east, may be the boundary of a Celtic sanctuary containing Glastonbury Tor. A legend of the Welsh saint, Collen, preserves undatable folklore ideas about the Tor as an entrance to Annwn, the underworld, and as a home of Gwyn-ap-Nudd, lord of the fairy folk and leader of the Wild Hunt, in which the spirits of the dead were snatched away through the clouds. A chapel which the monks built on top of the Tor was dedicated to St Michael, vanquisher of the powers of evil.

Traces of inhabitants on the Abbey site in Roman times have been found but no indication of their religion. Recent excavations on the Tor revealed human settlement there also, notably around 500 AD, the Arthurian period. As for the monastery, it was certainly founded by British Christians, on the present site, before the Saxon conquest. Archeologically a date early in the 6th century appears likely. However, a study of the various 'Lives' of British saints of the Dark Ages discloses the interesting fact that while several of them – David, for instance – are said to have visited Glastonbury, there is no saint whose biography credits him with its actual foundation. The community is simply there, in some form, its origins unexplained and farther back still. Hence it remains arguable that the Old Church and a small group of hermits may have been present before the 6th century.

The West Saxons overran central Somerset in 658. Their Christian king, Cenwalh, maintained Glastonbury without a break. It became the first major institution in which Celt and Teuton co-existed and co-operated – the birthplace, in a sense, of the United Kingdom, and a point of convergence for different traditions, which were thus readily available in the medieval revival of Celtic legend. During the 10th century St Dunstan was abbot and under his enlightened and capable rule Glastonbury became the fountain head of the recovery of learning after the Danish wars. Its monks laid the foundations of medieval civilization in England,

and several of them later became archbishops of Canterbury. After a rich and magnificent career throughout the Middle Ages, the Abbey was one of the last to be dissolved, succumbing only in 1539; the Abbot, Richard Whiting, was then convicted of treason and hanged.

'Not Built by Art of Man'

Most of the legends of Glastonbury's Christian past seem to have grown around the Old Church. The British monks were unable to tell the Saxons any clear story of its foundation, which was already lost in antiquity. As a result, around the year 1000, the biographer of St Dunstan assures his readers that the Old Church was 'not built by art of man, but prepared by God himself.' This passage, coupled with one or two cryptic phrases elsewhere, may have inspired the notion that Christ himself came to Britain as a boy and lived at Glastonbury.

The first specific stories are in the work of William of Malmesbury, who carried out researches at Glastonbury Abbey between 1125 and 1130. By the standards of his time he was a good historian, unwilling to record what he judged to be mere legend. His book *On the Antiquity of the Church at Glastonbury* survives only in a later edition, heavily interpolated by a different hand, but much of his own text can be recovered from passages which he copied into another book. He says: 'There are documents of no small credit, which have been discovered in certain places to the following effect: "No other hands than those of the disciples of Christ erected the church of Glastonbury." '

Whatever William's informants told him about this 1st century advent, he names no names, and passes on rather hurriedly to a supposed restoration of the Old Church by two papal envoys toward the year 170. The interpolated edition, however, expands his brief remarks into an account of 12 missionaries coming to Britain in 63 led by Joseph of Arimathea. It stated that the British king, though unmoved by their preaching, granted them land on Ynyswitrin, where they settled as hermits and built the church.

This enlarged text of William's book was compiled at the Abbey about 1240. Hence it is evident that the Joseph legend was established at Glastonbury by then – although the monks distrusted and omitted the Grail part of it. The problem of its origin turns on the question of what happened between William's original text and that of his interpolator. Was this Arimathean story brought in as a literary fiction, or a monastic fraud, or was it a genuine rediscovery of ancient tradition?

A Cloudy Historical Tradition

Some of the Grail romances narrow the search. Thus *Perlesvaus*, written about 1225, cites a Glastonbury Abbey source. Robert de Borron's unfinished *Joseph*, assigned to the 1190s, takes us a little farther back again. Here Joseph of Arimathea never reaches Britain himself, but his followers are commanded to take the Grail there, and seek out the 'Vales of Avalon'. That phrase, at that date, undoubtedly points to Somerset.

The Joseph legend was therefore current in some form toward the close of the 12th century. While there are good reasons for thinking that Robert de Borron took it from an earlier source, no one has traced it back any farther. The tale of Joseph's westward mission is connected somehow with the legend of the voyaging Maries, Mary, sister of the Virgin, Mary the mother of James and John and Mary Magdalene who are said to have come to Provence, with the Arimathean saint in their company. An Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury missal shows that the Maries were venerated at the Abbey before the Norman Conquest. Unfortunately it does not name Joseph with them.

An Unlikely Apostle

We are left, then, with suspicions that Joseph's mission was invented after William de Malmesbury. Too much has been made of William's failure to mention Joseph. He may have heard the story, but dismissed it, as he did dismiss various tales of Arthur which he heard but believed to be worthless fables. The claim that the official version was a pure fabrication of 12th century romancers or monks raise the query: why pick on Joseph of Arimathea? He was neither a likely apostle nor a particularly honourable one. There were ready-made legends that brought much more glorious Christians to Britain – St Paul, for instance. Yet neither romancers nor monks made use of them.

If we set aside the simple but overwishful theory that Joseph actually did come, we confront a number of proposed datings for the legend of Glastonbury's Christian beginnings, a number of guesses at the reason why Joseph was chosen as the hero. As the second point, most of the guesses postulate a misunderstanding (wilful or otherwise) of phrases in earlier texts, or of some inscription or ruin now vanished. Scholarly opinion favours an invention by Grail romancers, afterwards annexed by the Abbey. *Perlesvaus*, however, implies at least some degree of borrowing in the reverse direction and so perhaps does another romance, the *Grand Saint Graal*.

Whatever errors or falsehoods may have occurred, there is now a tendency to take the legend more seriously, not as literal truth but as an attempt to rationalize a cloudy historical tradition. Thus the late Professor Treharne, while totally ruling out the possibility of a visit by Joseph himself, concluded that the legend might still reflect a historical fact – in effect, that 'coming from the southwest, and along the south coast of the Bristol Channel, it was under Glastonbury Tor that Christianity found its first secure shelter and abiding-place in our remote land.'

The other stories of major Christian figures at Glastonbury are easier to explain and less interesting. Their growth was prompted by the monks' wish to increase the Abbey's prestige and attract pilgrims. Some of the Dark Age saints who are alleged to have come there – not only Patrick and David, but Bridget and others – may actually have come. What the monks manifestly did was to exaggerate their role.

***Facing page above* Part of the Abbey ruins. Legends say that Joseph of Arimathea or his descendants, the keepers of the Grail, brought Christianity to Glastonbury. Archeological evidence suggests that there was a monastery there from at least the early 6th century *Below left* The Holy Thorn, which blooms near Christmas time, may have been brought to the Abbey by a medieval pilgrim *Below right* The surrounding area is rich in Arthurian tradition: this stone near Slaughterbridge is known as 'King Arthur's stone', though the inscription does not name him**

Patrick was the most prominent, and the saint who received the most attention from document-fakers. It was claimed that after his long Irish ministry he returned to his native Britain, organized the hermits at Glastonbury into a more formal community, died among them and was buried. Before the 9th century his tomb was being shown on the right of the altar in the Old Church, and a stream of Irish pilgrims prayed there. The fact that they accepted the tomb as genuine, despite the natural wish to have Patrick in their own country, suggests that its credentials were strong. The hypothesis that the tradition refers to 'another man of the same name' is a dangerously easy way out, but in this case there is some early evidence to support it.

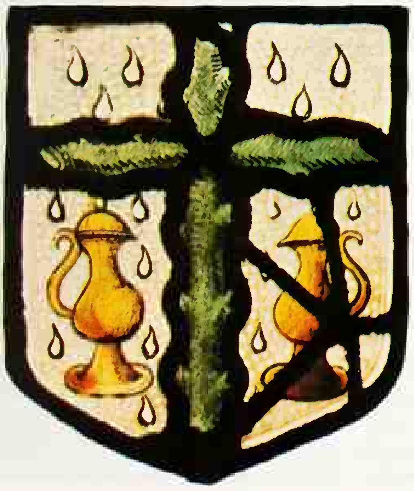
Legends of Arthur

The first known story that connects Arthur with Glastonbury is told by Caradoc of Llancarfan. About 1150 Caradoc wrote a *Life* of the 6th century British monk and historian Gildas. In this he says that Gildas lived for a time with the Glastonbury community. Meanwhile Arthur (portrayed by Caradoc as a somewhat dubious upstart) was trying to extend his power over Britain. Somerset was independent under its king Melwas, who had a stronghold close to the monastery. He carried off Arthur's wife 'Guennuvar' and kept her there. Arthur arrived with troops from Devon and Cornwall, but the marshes hindered his advance. Gildas and the Abbot mediated and, meeting under the sacred roof of the Old Church, the kings agreed on a pact and the lady was restored.

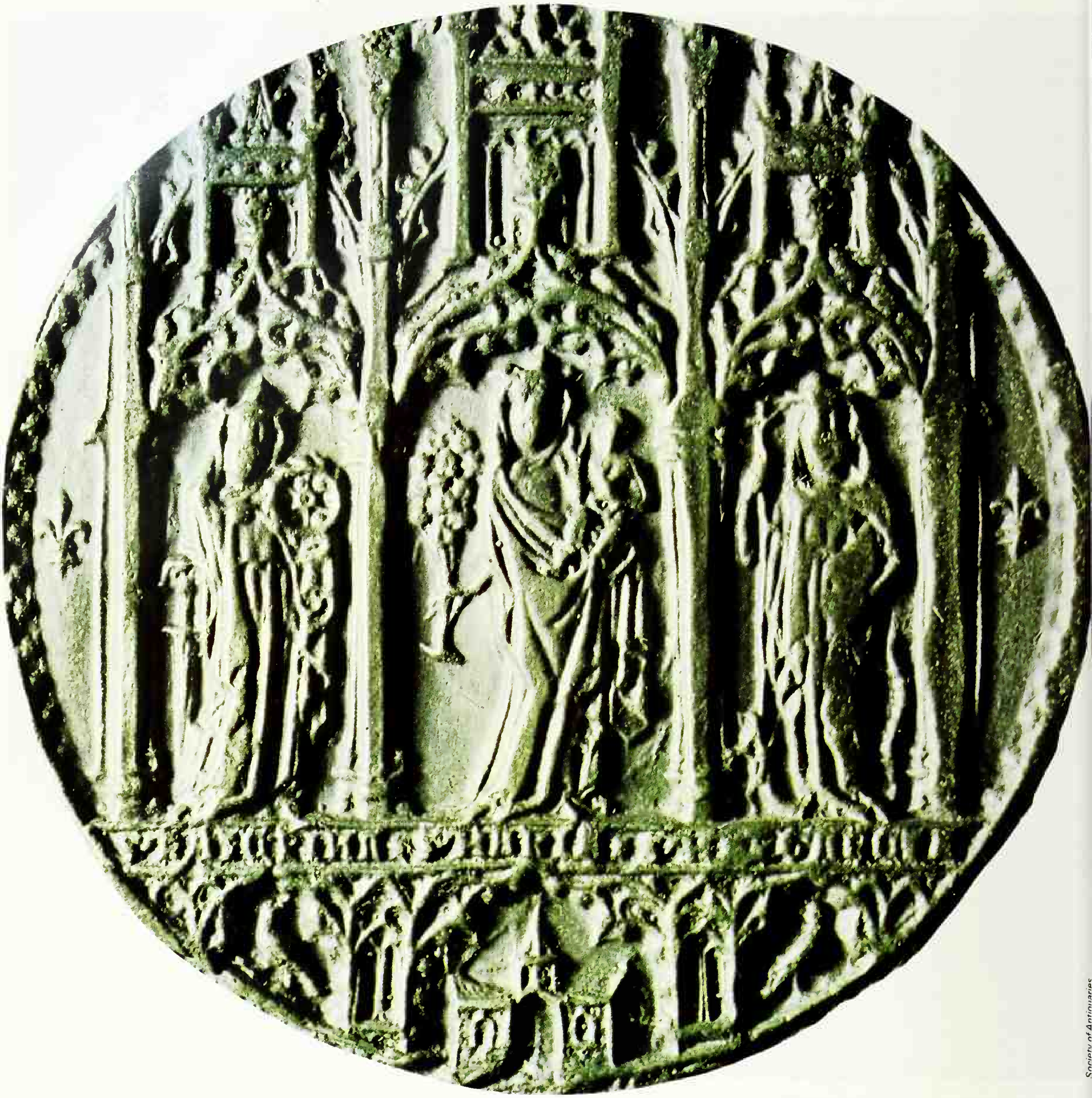
In the Round Table romances the story reappears, but the geography becomes vaguer and the characters change. Melwas turns into 'Meleagant' and Lancelot takes Arthur's place as the rescuer. The abduction of the Queen looks like a Celtic fairy tale motif. However, the recent discovery of what may be interpreted as a Dark Age citadel on the Tor suggests that Melwas may have been a real local king, in which case a war and treaty involving Arthur become more plausible.

The better-known story of Arthur's grave is confused by the doubts over the name Avalon and its application to Glastonbury. The island of Avalon, the otherworldly apple orchard, may have been originally the island of Avallach, an unlocalized hero of Celtic legend. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, composed

Peter Cheze-Brown



Peter Cheze-Brown



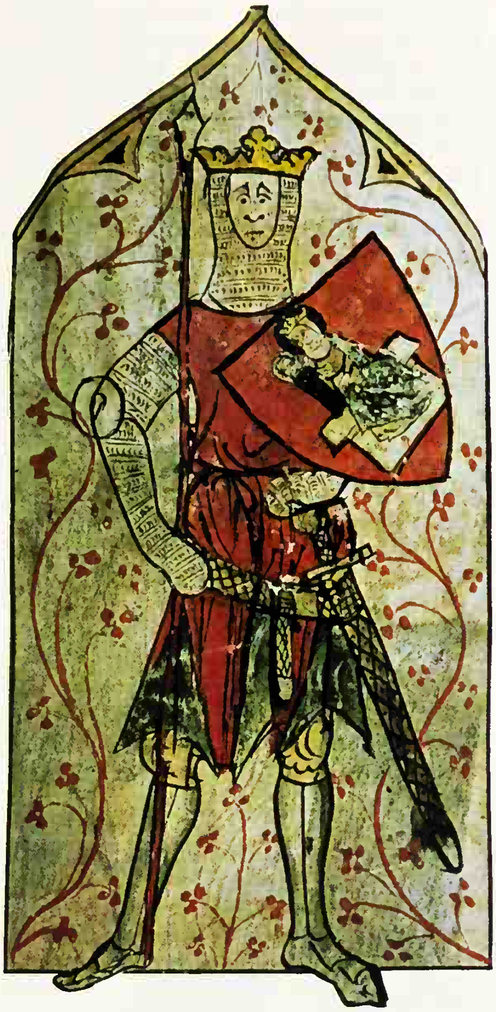
Seal of the Abbey, 14th century, showing the Holy Thorn. The story that it grew from Joseph of Arimathea's staff, planted in the ground, has not been traced back before 1716

Society of Antiquaries

between 1135 and 1140, says that Arthur's sword was forged in the Isle of Avalon, and that he was taken there after his last battle for his wounds to be healed. However, Geoffrey's Avalon is no definite place, and in a later work he makes it a sort of Isle of the Blest, out in the Atlantic. Here again it is Arthur's last earthly destination.

Glastonbury may have been a pagan centre and a supposed gateway to Annwn, the realm of shades and fairy folk – which indeed is sometimes equated with Avalon in Welsh folklore. Its pagan aura may even account for the monastery, if the founders' motive was exorcism and purification. But all this is conjecture. If Arthur was buried there, the reason was simply that the monks' graveyard, with its relics of saints, was an honourable burial place. His alleged exhumation in 1190 pinned down the name Avalon on the map without proving much about it.

Several medieval authors describe the event and the account given by Giraldus Cambrensis is valuable because he was a sceptic about King Arthur when most people were credulous. Ostensibly, the secret of Arthur's burial was betrayed to Henry II by a Welsh bard. The grave was between two 'pyramids' or memorial pillars in the cemetery of Glastonbury Abbey. King Henry had strong motives for discovering the remains on an English site: it would reinforce his own title to the Arthurian succession and also, by proving that Arthur was dead, it would undermine the Celtic hope of his Messianic return, a hope which was a political irritant in several parts of the Plantagenet domains. Henry indicated the direction of his thoughts to the abbot. For some years no action was taken. In 1184 most of the Abbey, including the Old Church, was burnt down, and in the course of rebuilding the monks who were digging at the site struck a stone slab and a lead cross, inscribed HIC IACET SEPULTUS INCLITUS REX ARTURIUS IN INSULA AVALONIA (here lies buried the renowned King Arthur in the Isle of Avalon) together with a coffin made out of



King Arthur, from an early 14th century manuscript. In legend Arthur was taken to Avalon after being wounded in his last battle, and in 1190 the monks of Glastonbury announced the discovery of his grave

British Museum

a hollowed-out oak log containing the bones of a tall man with a damaged skull, and – according to some versions – some smaller bones, taken to be those of Guinevere.

These relics were placed in a casket and suitably enshrined. Edward I re-interred the casket before the high altar, but the contents were dispersed at the Abbey's dissolution in the 16th century.

The 12th century monks, like Henry himself, had powerful inducements to find what they were looking for, since Arthur's fame could help them in raising funds to rebuild their Abbey. Yet the theory of a total fraud is unsatisfactory. Despite the blow to Welsh hopes and pride, no Welshman seems to have challenged the find, or produced a rival Avalon. It is thus likely that the bardic tradition about the Glastonbury grave was at least an old and respected one, too firmly rooted to dismiss, once the secret was out.

The area was re-excavated by C.A. Ralegh Radford in 1962 and '63. He ascertained that the monks had indeed dug where they said. There were traces, not only of their spade-work and filling-in, but of the two memorial pillars, and the stone lining of an important grave at a great depth. By considering the stratification of the cemetery, the nature of Dark Age grave-markers, and the style of lettering in old drawings of the leaden cross, which was preserved until the 18th century, Radford was able to reconstruct the history of the grave in a way which amounted to a case for its genuineness, though not conclusively.

Archeological findings at Cadbury Castle (see CAMELOT) have increased the likelihood of a link of some sort between Arthur and Glastonbury. The two places are only a dozen miles apart, and in sight of each other. But there is no certain evidence of any connection.

The Flowering Thorn

In the words of the Victorian historian E.A. Freeman, 'We need not believe that the Glastonbury legends are records of facts; but the existence of those legends is a very great fact.' The proofs of imaginative falsification, monastic and post-monastic, are beyond dispute, yet they are powerless to destroy the spell. This is partly due to Glastonbury's real age, genuine importance, and visual fascination, but partly to subtler causes arising from the nature of myth in general, and the peculiar concentration of themes which has occurred here.

The spell has gone on adding to the mythology. Thus, the famous Holy Thorn is a fairly late comer. On the eve of the Abbey's dissolution we find a few allusions to a thorn tree on Wearyall Hill which bloomed at Christmas. It was cut down by Puritans, but some of its descendants are still flourishing in the neighbourhood, and elsewhere. The tale that Joseph of Arimathea planted the staff in the ground, and that it came to life and grew appears first in 1716. Owing to the change-over to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, the Thorn now blossoms in January. It does in fact resemble Syrian types of thorn; the parent plant might have been brought over by some medieval pilgrim.

Another focus of religious and antiquarian speculation is Chalice Well, in the valley between the Tor and the smaller hill beside it. This has been connected with Joseph and the Grail, and it plays a major part in John Cowper Powys's novel *A Glastonbury Romance*. However, there is no sign that any special notice was taken of it before the 18th century. Today it is preserved in a garden by the Chalice Well Trust, a society which sponsored much of the archeological work of the 1960s.

Two interesting theories have been promoted in recent years. One asserts that Glastonbury lies at the heart of a huge zodiac circle, 10 miles across, its symbols delineated by hills, roads and various natural or man-made features. Katherine Maltwood, who believed she had discovered this phenomenon and published a guide to it in 1929, named the zodiac the Temple of the Stars, dated it to about 2700 BC and attributed it tentatively to the Sumerians. Later writers have theorised that magnetic or other currents of force in the earth caused human beings to lay out roads or fix field boundaries in accordance with the plan, without being consciously aware of it. The circle of the zodiac is said to be the original Round Table, and the figure of Sagittarius is identified with Arthur himself.

This Glastonbury zodiac is best regarded as modern myth. A more persuasive theory identifies the terraces which wind their way around the Tor as the remains of a sacred maze or processional path, along which worshippers long before the coming of Christianity trod their way to the summit and the heart of the labyrinth. (See also ARTHUR; GRAIL)

GEOFFREY ASHE*

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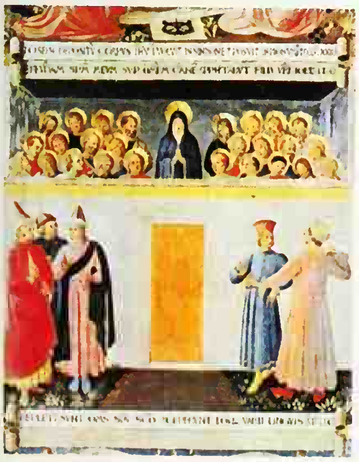


Glossolalia

Technical term (from the Greek words for 'tongue' and 'talking') for speaking in tongues, the ability to speak in unknown and mysterious languages in a state of intense religious excitement: the speaker is believed to be the vehicle of, or in touch with, a supernatural power: Acts, chapter 2, describes the experience of the apostles when 'filled with the Holy Spirit': there has been a recent revival of glossolalia among some Protestant groups.

See SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

Gnomes

Name invented by Paracelsus for the elementals of the earth, dwarfish spirits which live underground and guard buried treasures: Paracelsus said that they move through the earth as easily as we move through the air.

See ELEMENTS; FAIRIES.

Now regarded as a religion in its own right, rather than as eccentric Greek philosophy or Christian heresy, Gnosticism was the religion of those who were convinced of the presence of a divine ingredient within themselves, the 'divine self'; this realization was the essential gnosis, the knowledge which brought salvation

GNOSTICISM

SOME EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS, including Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius, tell us that there existed in their time certain sectarians or heretics who called themselves Gnostics ('those who know') because they claimed to possess gnosis, 'knowledge'. In modern times the label has been applied to a whole set of Christian heretics, from the early centuries AD onwards, who had some characteristics in common and of whom Valentinus in the 2nd century was the most important.

The fragments of Gnostic teachings transmitted to us by their early Christian opponents have been thoroughly studied, especially by German scholars. The gnosis that the Gnostics claimed was not scientific or philosophical knowledge, acquired by the use of reason, but knowledge acquired through a revelation given by the grace of God, a 'knowledge of the heart' as one Gnostic writing (the Gospel of Truth) calls it. It consisted of intuitive knowledge and esoteric lore which was believed to carry with it the salvation of its possessor.

It has also been established that Gnosticism was not specifically Christian. It has its counterparts in pagan Hellenism (in the collection of Greek-Egyptian occult writings called the *Corpus Hermeticum* – see HERMETICA) and even in Judaism. Professor Gershom Scholem has discovered a Jewish form of esoteric and ecstatic mysticism which he calls 'Jewish Gnosticism', although it lacks one of the beliefs generally characteristic of Gnostics: the distinction between the unknown supreme God and the demiurge, the lower spiritual power that created the world.

These findings led some scholars to consider Gnosticism as a religion of its own with its own characteristic features, by contrast with earlier views of it as a system of Greek religious philosophy, as a Christian heresy, or as the descendant of Babylonian, Persian and Indian concepts. According to Hans Jonas (*Gnosis und Spatantiker Geist*, 1933) Gnosticism was neither Greek and philosophical nor a survival of oriental ideas but a new and revolutionary movement, rebelling against the structures of this world, which the Greeks venerated as a harmony and the Jews believed to have been created by God. Gnosis was an awareness of being a stranger in the world, of having been thrown into an absurd universe. The systems of the Gnostics should be read as an expression of such basic experiences as fear, anxiety, disgust and despair.

This picture is correct but one-sided. In my *Gnosis als Weltreligion* (1951) I suggested that Gnosticism expressed a specific religious experience, which was frequently turned into a myth. An example is the story that when Mani, the founder of the Manichean religion, was 12 years old God sent an angel to him, to inspire him. When he was 24, the angel came to him again and said, 'The time has now come to make your public appearance and to proclaim your own doctrine.' The name of the angel means 'twin' and he is the twin-brother or 'divine self' of Mani.

This Manichean myth expresses the encounter between the I, the ego, and the divine self. In the system of Valentinus we find the similar concept of the guardian angel, who accompanies a man throughout his life, who reveals the gnosis to him, forms a couple with him and is not allowed to enter eternal bliss without him. This encounter of the I and the Self, their distinction and yet their fundamental unity, was certainly a tenet of Valentinian Gnosticism and seems to reflect a personal experience. The Gospel of Truth, for instance, possibly written by Valentinus himself and certainly originating from his school, offers no explicit system but impressively describes the Gnostic's experiences, the nightmare of his life in this world, and his discovery of the self when he hears the call from above.

It seems clear that at least some of the major Gnostic systems were inspired by vivid emotions and personal experiences. And it is now generally accepted that Gnosticism was not a philosophy, or even a Christian heresy, but a religion with its own specific views about God, the world and man. God is the suffering God, the world is an error, man is a stranger whose inward self is of the same substance as God.

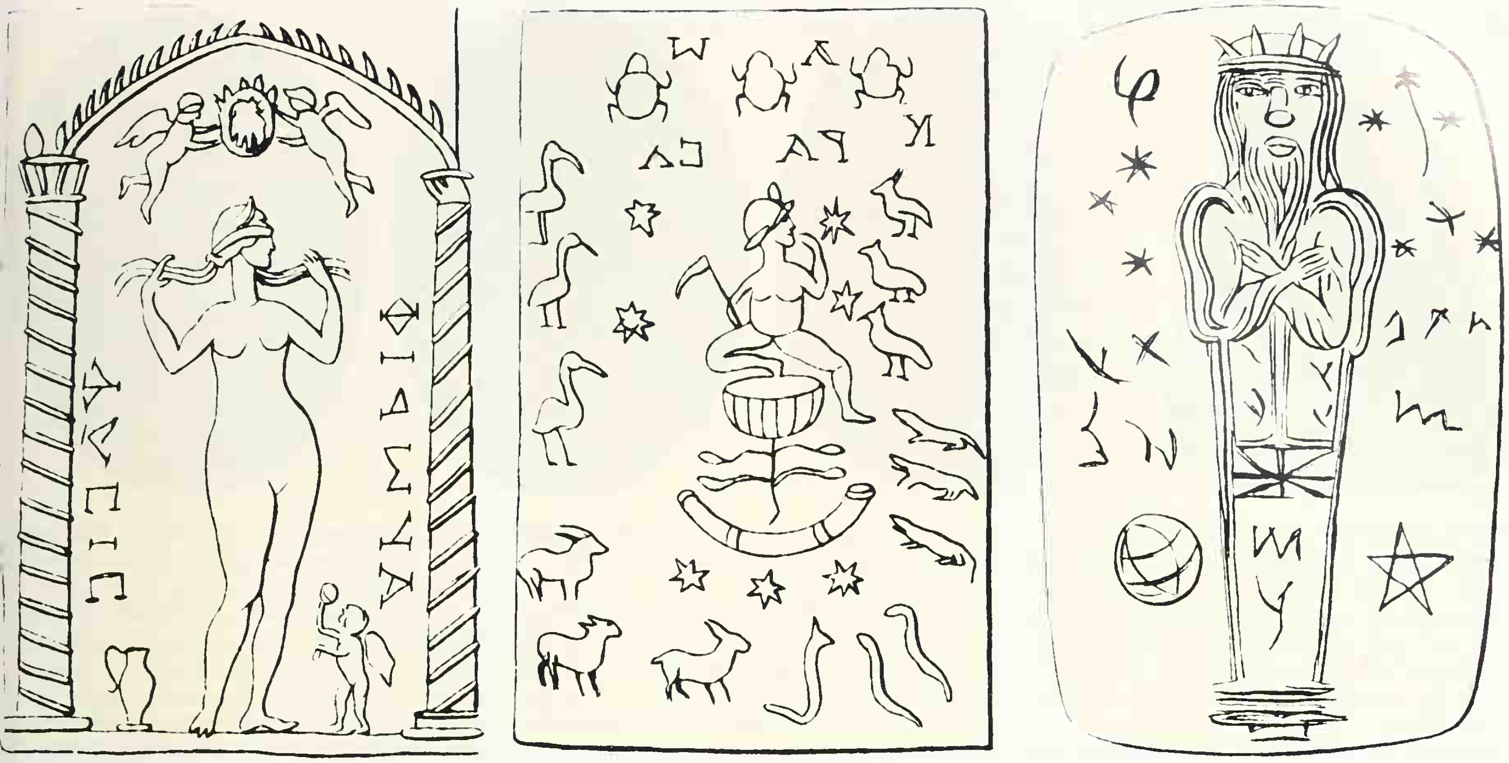
The Nag Hammadi Texts

The discovery in the 1940s of Gnostic texts written in Coptic, at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, has greatly enlarged our knowledge of Gnostic beliefs, and thrown new light on the origins of Gnosticism. These manuscripts reveal that it had its roots, or some of its roots, in Judaism.

This new solution of an old problem was stubbornly opposed as long as Judaism was identified with the Pharisees and was regarded as a monolithic, monotheistic religion. After all, the early Gnostics rejected

British Museum

Gnosticism was a religion but some of its ideas lent themselves readily to magic. The gnostic conviction that the world was made and is ruled by evil powers stimulated the use of amulets to ward off harm



Left Drawing of a gem showing Venus at her mirror, probably intended to draw love towards the wearer as it is made of magnetic haematite **Centre** Magic symbols on what is probably a medieval gem **Right** The Egyptian god Horus as Abraxas, a supernatural power who ruled the year

the Jewish god who created the world, relegating him to the position of demiurge, and rejecting the Old Testament. But at the beginning of our era Judaism embraced various different groups.

There were the adherents of Wisdom, of which the book of Proverbs speaks. According to their literature, Wisdom was a companion of God. She created the world, became the paramour of the wise man and, according to certain versions, left the earth and returned to her heavenly abode. It is in this perspective that we must see the doctrine of Simon Magus of Samaria, according to which the Idea of God, called Wisdom or Helen, springing forth from God and knowing his will, descended to the lower regions and brought forth the angels and powers (the rulers of the heavens) by whom this world was made. This is a gnostic development of the Samaritan and Jewish concepts that Wisdom was instrumental in creating the world.

There were also the Essenes (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS), who taught a dualism of light and darkness, and stressed the importance of knowledge of God. Much remains uncertain here, because the relationships between the Essenes, John the Baptist and Gnosticism are obscure.

The Fathers of the Church considered the Samaritans Dositheus, Simon Magus and Menander to be the first Gnostics. The books of the Samaritans, who were heterodox Jews, reveal a mythological imagery which could easily lead to Gnosticism, and it is probable that Gnosticism did begin in Samaria, that is, on Palestinian soil.

It would be unwise to be too specific, however. In many cases we can find in Gnosticism certain elements derived from Judaism without being able to identify the exact channels through which these concepts were transmitted. But how could the Gnostics, who distinguished between the high unknown God and an inferior creator, the Jewish god or demiurge, to whom they were violently hostile, be Jews or in sympathy with Jews? Some find here traces of antisemitism, which was by no means absent in Antioch and Alexandria, centres of early Gnosticism. Others point out that the Gnostics usually regarded the demiurge as an angel, and that there was a sect among the Jews who held a similar opinion. This was the pre-Christian sect of Magharians, who distinguished between God and an angel who is the creator of the world and is responsible for all the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Old Testament.

So it would seem that the Gnostic concept of the world-creator as an inferior angel was derived from Jewish sources, though from rebellious and heterodox ones. This is important for Gnostic origins in general. Some scholars distinguish between absolute dualism and relative dualism. The first is called 'Iranian', implying that it must be of Iranian origin, because Iranian religion is an absolute dualism of light and darkness, good and evil (see AHRIMAN). But the concept of the demiurge as an angel reflects a relative dualism, which seems to be the original concept. Absolute dualism is Gnosticism in a secondary and later development.

The Gnosticism of the 2nd century sects involved a coherent series of characteristics that can be summarized in the idea of a divine spark in man, deriving from the divine realm, fallen into this world of fate, birth and death, and needing to be awakened by the divine counterpart of the self in order to be finally reintegrated. This idea is based on the concept of a downward movement of the divine whose periphery (often called Sophia or Ennoia) had to submit to the fate of entering into a crisis and producing – even if only indirectly – this world, upon which it cannot turn its back, since it is necessary for it to recover the *pneuma* (literally 'breath', the fallen divine element).

The Myth of Valentinus

Valentinus expressed these ideas in a myth which is not transmitted by any author of antiquity but which can be reconstructed. His followers split into an Occidental school led by Ptolomaeus and Heracleon who introduced some innovations and alterations, and an Oriental school which remained more faithful to its master. So the myth of Valentinus can be hypothetically reconstructed in the following way (and it may be added that the recently discovered Valentinian treatises of the Jung Codex have confirmed this hypothesis).

In invisible and ineffable heights Depth was pre-existent. With him was Silence. Together they generate the Pleroma (fullness of the spiritual world), consisting of 30 aeons (patterns of thought or archetypes). The very youngest of these, Wisdom (Sophia), led astray by pretended love, which was actually *hubris* (overweening pride), desired to understand the unfathomable depth of God and is expelled from the Pleroma. (The underlying idea is that philosophical reason cannot penetrate the mysteries of God and is the origin of the fall.)

In the empty space devoid of knowledge which she had created by her trespass Sophia brought forth Jesus in remembrance of the higher world, but with a kind of shadow. And he purged the shadow of deficiency from himself and returned to the

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spiritual universe above. Left outside, alone, Sophia was subject to every sort of passion, sorrow, fear, despair, ignorance. (From these passions the elements of the world together with the world-soul and the demiurge were to be derived.)

At her request, Jesus asked the aeons to help Sophia. After the Holy Spirit had revealed the gnosis of God to them, the aeons together formed the Saviour, Christ, who is the perfect expression of the spiritual world. He was sent with his angels to Sophia, the world-spirit in exile, and delivered her from her passions, which became the world.

There are three layers of reality in this universe: the sublunar, material world, dominated by the Devil; the celestial, psychic world, dominated by the demiurge or Yahweh, who tends to be hostile; and the world above the planets, where Sophia and the spiritual beings are. Correspondingly, in man there is a material part, the body; a soul, the seat of ethical awareness and the power of reason; and a spirit, which dreams unconsciously in man and is the divine spark, of the same substance as Sophia and even God.

Not all men are spiritual. Some are materialistic, the pagans. Others, called 'psychics', have a soul and believe in the demiurge but have no awareness of the spiritual world above: these are the Jews and the ordinary Christian churchgoers. So history is a progress from materialism and paganism, by way of religion and ethics, to spiritual freedom and gnosis. All this is a necessary process. The world-spirit in exile must go through the Inferno of matter and the Purgatory of morals to arrive at the spiritual Paradise. The spirit in man is united with the soul so that it may be formed and educated in practical life, for it needs psychic and sense training.

Gnosticism and Christianity

In this system it is Christ who brings the decisive revelation of gnosis. He assumed or 'put on' Jesus at baptism, and thereby the whole of spiritual mankind, and saved it through the Resurrection. Since Christ, man can become aware of his spiritual self and can return to his origin above. When every spiritual being has received gnosis and has become aware of his divine being, the final consummation of the world-process

Further examples of the so-called 'Gnostic gems' bearing a variety of magical symbols

will take place. Christ and Sophia who have been waiting for the spiritual man at the entrance of the Pleroma, enter the bridal chamber to achieve their union. They are followed by the Gnostics and their guardian angels as higher Selves, who are bride and bridegroom also. In the Pleroma they perform 'the spiritual and eternal mystery of sacred marriage', which is the complete union of the I and the Self.

This doctrine of Valentinus should be compared with the Apocryphon of John, of which three copies were found at Nag Hammadi. In antiquity Irenaeus said that the doctrine of Valentinus was based on an earlier and more primitive system. This could be a system like that of the Apocryphon of John. There too we find an impressive description of the unknown God and his female counterpart, who together bring forth a spiritual world of aeons. The last of these, Sophia, falls through lust, brings forth a hostile demiurge and brings about the world-process, in which the spirit fights against evil and is delivered through gnosis. But in this system Christ has no part as Saviour. It would seem that this system (dating from c 100 AD) is non-Christian in origin.

The Christian influence on Valentinus now becomes clear. According to him, it is Christ who brings gnosis, or 'self-consciousness', to mankind. The philosophy of history which saw the delivery through Christ as the surpassing of paganism and Judaism, and as the central event in the evolution of the universe, appears as a new idea. Valentinus has hellenized and Christian-ized an existing gnostic myth which was essentially non-Christian.

His followers of the Occidental school went further. Valentinus taught that God was two, Depth and Silence: an adherent of the Occidental school, quoted by Irenaeus, declared that God is one. Valentinus described the demiurge as generally hostile; according to the Occidental school the demiurge, though ignorant, was friendly and helpful. Valentinus thought that Christ had only a spiritual body; Ptolemaeus said that Christ also had a soul and a psychic body. This implied that not only the spiritual men but also the psychic men, if they behaved well, could be saved and would live eternally in the spiritual world at the entrance of the Pleroma.

These clumsy innovations, which made the Valentinian position so confused and bewildering, reveal the desire to compromise with the Church, which taught that God was one, that Christ was a real man, that the simple true believer would inherit eternal life. But these concessions could not disguise the fact that Gnosticism was a different religion from Christianity. Even if the demiurge is friendly, he is not the creator of heaven and earth who is the Father of Christ in Christianity. Even if Christ has a psychic body as well as a spiritual body, he is not a real man. Even if the ordinary churchgoer as well as the Gnostic could become spiritually immortal, this is far from the doctrine of the Church, which taught a bodily resurrection and a final ending of the material universe.

Free Fall

The Gnostic doctrine of the inferior demiurge, and their denial of the real body of Christ and of bodily resurrection, remained the principal targets of Christian authors like Irenaeus and Origen in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. But though Origen opposed Gnosticism, he accepted many Valentinian ideas and in a way continued the Christianizing process which Valentinus had begun and which had been carried further by Heracleon.

It seems probable that the *Tractatus Tripartitus*, one of the treatises of the Jung Codex, is due to Heracleon. In it we find several doctrines which come very near to the concepts of Origen. For example, the *Tractatus Tripartitus* stresses the freedom of the will, which is responsible for the fall of Sophia. Sophia fell through her free will. This is completely different from the original concept of Valentinus, in which the fall of Sophia is the outcome of a crisis in the Pleroma. This 'passion' first arose among the higher aeons and passed as if by contagion to Sophia, like an illness that starts in certain parts of the body and comes to an outbreak in others. The fall is the outcome of a necessary process within God, not the consequence of the free will of a spiritual being, as in the *Tractatus Tripartitus*.

According to Origen, the fall is due to the free decision of the spirits who lived in the

The True Self

The very word *gnosis* shows that the Gnostic *knows*. He does not know because he has gradually learned; he knows because revelation has been given him. He does not believe, for faith is inferior to gnosis. And his gnosis, 'the knowledge of the ineffable greatness', is itself perfect redemption.

Two famous definitions come from the Valentinians. The first explains that 'gnosis is redemption of the inner spiritual man', not of the body or the soul. The second tells what the questions are to which gnosis provides answers. Gnostics know 'who we were and what we have become; where we were or where we had been made to fall; whither we are hastening, whence we are being redeemed; what birth is and what rebirth is...'

Gnostics know that they were originally spiritual beings who have come to live in souls and bodies; they once dwelt in the spiritual world above but have been made to fall into this world of sense and sin. Now, thanks to their self-knowledge, they are hastening back above, having been redeemed from this world below . . . The Gnostic is a Gnostic because he knows, by revelation, who his true self is. Other religions are in varying measure God-centred. The Gnostic is self-centred. He is concerned with mythological details about the origin of the universe and of mankind, but only because they express and illuminate his understanding of himself.

R. M. Grant
Gnosticism and Early Christianity

spiritual world before our world was created. This emphasis on freedom is the main contention of his system, for he uses the belief in free will to attack the Gnostic view that only a few men, the spiritual men, will be saved. But the *Tractatus Tripartitus* shows that at least one Valentinian Gnostic had given a lead to Origen. In this perspective the theological system of Origen is the end of the process of the Christianization of Gnosticism.

It is more difficult to measure the influence of the Gnostics on the philosopher Plotinus (see PLOTINUS). He was a friend of Gnostics (Valentinians, as it transpires) and tolerated them for years in his school before he wrote a famous treatise against them. His system has much in common with that of Valentinus and Heracleon and so Gnosticism served as a fertilizer of the two main streams of thought which were to dominate the future of the West, Christian theology and Neoplatonist philosophy.

Gnosticism did not disappear. Gnostic schools persisted in the Roman Empire for many centuries but they were no longer a deadly threat to the Christian Church and they do not have the historical importance of the schools of the 2nd century. Outside the Roman Empire, Gnosticism deeply influenced Mani and it was in the religion which he founded that Gnosticism became a world religion. Obscure eastern sects which were probably influenced by Gnosticism in turn influenced the medieval Bogomils and Cathars. The theosophical movement of this century has much in common with Gnosticism and rightly lists the Gnostics among its spiritual ancestors.

(See also BOGOMILS; CATHARS; DUALISM; MANICHAEANS; SIMON MAGUS.)

G.QUISPEL

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GOAT

THE GOAT IS A SYMBOL sometimes of agility and sometimes of an obstinate insistence on having one's own way (and so its Latin name is enshrined in the word 'caprice'). In popular traditional astrology those born under Capricorn are assigned the goatish characteristics of leaping over difficulties and butting away obstacles. But the goat is far better known for its proverbial lechery, its stench and its link with the Devil, all of which are connected in the reports of the witch trials in Europe.

One of the earliest representations of what is claimed to be a witch is to be found in the western doorway of Lyon cathedral in France. In an early 14th-century sculptured panel, a hag is shown riding on the back of a goat, and whirling what appears to be a cat in her left hand.

An attack on the witches of Arras in 1460 says that the Devil appeared to them as a goat, a dog or a monkey, but never in human form. They made offerings to him and worshipped him. 'Then with candles in their hands they kiss the hind parts of the goat that is the Devil . . .'

The statement that the Devil never appeared in human form was contradicted all over Europe, but that he was frequently an animal, especially a goat, was confirmed in many confessions extorted from suspects (though not in England and Scotland, where there is no trace of the Devil as a goat). A character in Martin le Franc's *Champion des Dames*, of the mid-15th century, says that at 'the obscene synagogue' the witches gazed upon the Devil in the form of a cat or a he-goat.

Some of the descriptions suggest a man dressed up as an animal. At Poitiers in 1574 the Devil was 'a great black goat who talked like a man'. At Avignon he was a man until the time came for him to mount a rock to be worshipped, when he turned into a goat, described in the sentence pronounced in 1582 as filthy, stinking and black.

Witches were sometimes accused of riding to their sabbaths on demonic goats. The Italian witch judge Paulus Grillandus said that in 1525 a suspect told him that she went to witch meetings riding on a he-goat which would be waiting for her at her door when she wanted to set off. In the *Compendium Maleficarum* of Francesco-Maria Guazzo, an early 17th-century friar who prepared this encyclopedic work on witchcraft at the request of the bishop of Milan, a woodcut portrays a witch riding off in this manner.

Pan and Satyrs

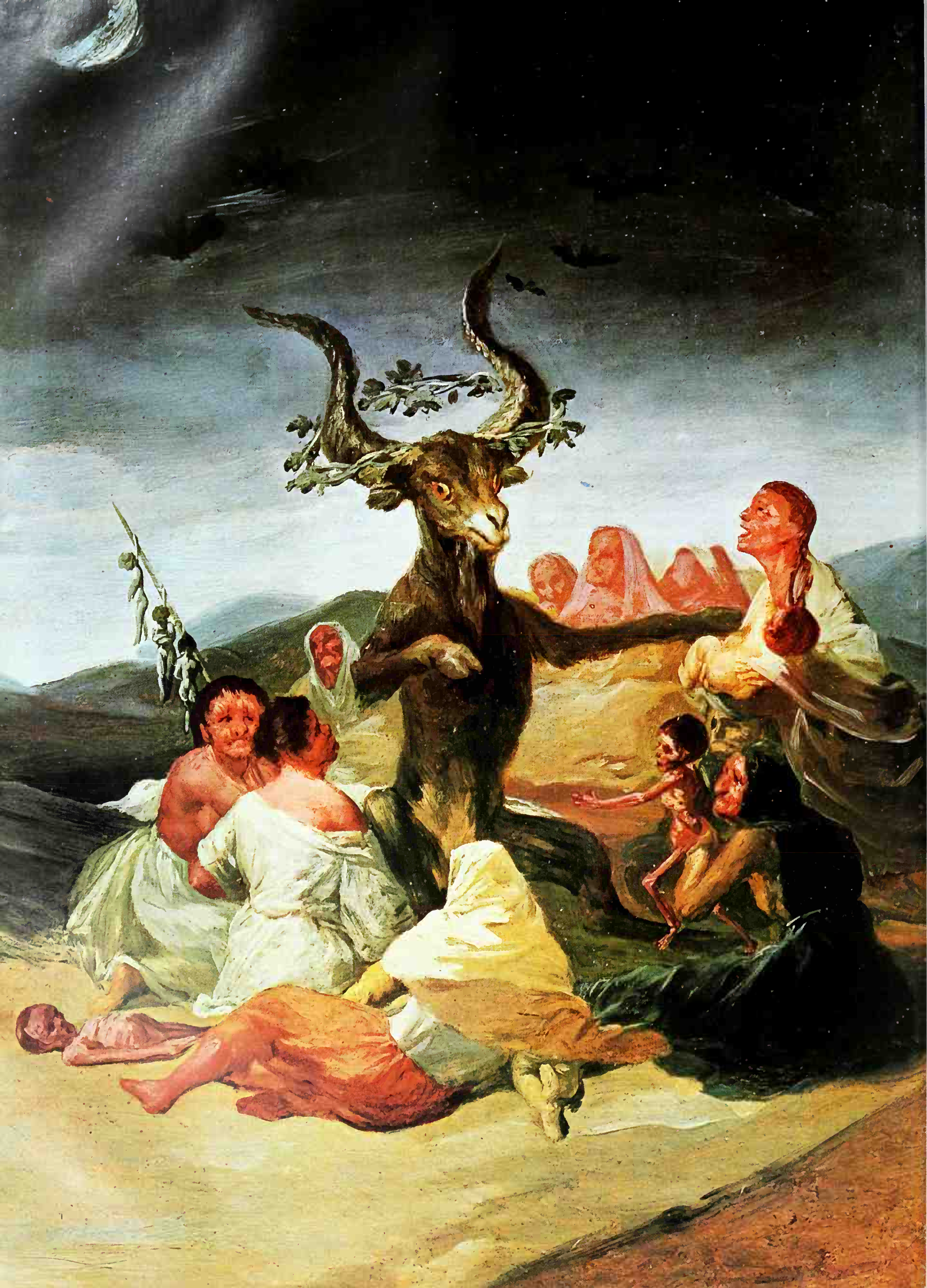
To judge from some of the confessions and the pictures which artists based on them, the Devil often looked not unlike the Greek god Pan, who had a human body with the horns, ears, loins, legs and hooves of a goat. He was an amorous god and his function was to make flocks fertile. At an annual festival in February in Rome, the Lupercalia, goats and a dog were sacrificed to Faunus, who was identified by classical writers as Pan. Two young men, naked except for girdles made of the skins of the sacrificed animals, ran round the boundary of the old city of Rome on the Palatine hill. They struck at anyone they met with strips of goatskin. They themselves were popularly called 'he-goats' and a woman struck by them was supposed to be delivered from barrenness.

The name of the festival suggests warding off wolves or propitiating a wolf god. It is thought that the ceremony was a rustic ritual mingling purification and fertility magic with the beating of the bounds.

Some writers have assumed a connection between the Devil of the witches and Pan or the satyrs, the lustful goatish creatures who revelled in the train of Dionysus. Dionysus himself, also a god of fertility in some of his aspects, was sometimes connected with the goat (though more often with the bull). At the village of Eleutherai outside Athens he was called Melanaigis, 'he of the black goatskin', and the 'goat-song' in his honour eventually developed into the Greek tragedy (see DRAMA).

It is unlikely that the witch religion was a survival of the worship of Pan, Dionysus or any particular pagan deity, but the figure of the lustful man-goat may have influenced the linking of the goat with the lord of witches, who were renowned for their transports of animal lechery.

Another possible source of the goat's link with the Devil can be found in both classical and Jewish traditions, and is again connected with one of the features of witchcraft which most obsessed the persecutors – the



orgy in which the worshippers copulated with their master and sometimes with his subordinate demons. There were plenty of classical myths in which human beings had intercourse with gods – who to Christians were devils – and the belief that the powers of darkness desired the love of women also occurred in Jewish lore, especially in the legend of the Watchers, the fallen angels who sinned through their lust for the daughters of men (see DEVIL).

A Goat for Azazel

The leader of the Watchers (according to Enoch, a Jewish apocryphal book) was Azazel, who was associated with Mars, the planet of war, and who, after his descent to earth, taught men evil by showing them how to make weapons of bloodshed. This same Azazel was connected with the Jewish scapegoat ritual. Down to 70 AD, a goat was selected each year 'for Azazel'. It was formally loaded with the sins of the people and sent away into the wilderness 'to Azazel' (Leviticus, chapter 16). The ritual was not forgotten and in the 13th century Rabbi Moses ben Nahmen explained that:

> God has commanded us, however, to send a goat on Yom Kippur to the ruler whose realm is in the places of desolation. From the emanation of his power come destruction and ruin; he ascends to the stars of the sword, of blood, of wars, quarrels, wounds, blows, disintegration and destruction. He is associated with the planet Mars. His portion among the peoples is Esau, a people who live by the sword; and his portion among the animals is the goat. The demons are part of his realm and are called in the Bible *seirim* (he-goats); he and his people are named Seir.

The scapegoat ritual tended to connect the goat with evil and, through the link with Azazel, with the fallen angels and the Devil. This association was hammered home by St Matthew's gospel (chapter 25) in which Jesus likens the righteous to sheep and the wicked to goats, and says that the goats will be condemned to 'the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'.

The seirim or goat-demons assigned to Azazel by Rabbi Moses ben Nahmen are mentioned several times in the Old Testament. Azazel and the Watchers lusted for mortal women and it seems that the seirim may have done so too, for Leviticus 17.7 says, 'So they shall no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs (*seirim*), after whom they play the harlot' (and, 'neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it' – 18.23). The translation 'satyrs' itself indicates the mingling in western Europe of classical and Jewish traditions about goatish beings which desire women.

The link between the scapegoat, Azazel, the Watchers or fallen angels, and the lecherous goat-demons may have influenced the medieval belief that witches adored the Devil by copulating with him in the form of a goat. The belief was probably strengthened by the passage in Exodus (chapter 22) which was so frequently cited as a justification for witch-hunting: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live', followed immediately by, 'Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. He that sacrificeth unto any god save the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed' (King James version).

The copulation of women with a divine goat is reported in antiquity from Egypt. In the 5th century BC, Herodotus (book 2) says that the people of Mendes in the Nile Delta venerate all goats, especially male ones. 'One of them is held in particular reverence, and when he dies the whole province goes into mourning... In this province not long ago a goat tupped a woman, in full view of everybody – a most surprising incident.'

Herodotus identified the divine he-goat as Pan. Writing much later, Plutarch (died c 120 AD) says that the most beautiful women were selected to lie with the divine goat of Mendes. Much later still, the goat turns up as Eliphas Levi's Goat of Mendes or Baphomet of Mendes (see BAPHOMET), which he identified with the heathen idol honoured by the Templars and suggested was the Devil of the witches' sabbath.

Left **Witches were widely reported to worship the Devil in the form of a goat, as in this painting by Goya** ***Below*** **Many witches' descriptions of the Devil suggest a man disguised as an animal: a somewhat fanciful exhibit in the Witches' House Museum, Boscastle in Cornwall, England** ***Below right*** **A comparison is sometimes drawn between the goat-Devil of the witches and the lustful goatish creatures associated with the cult of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and revelry: terracotta statuette of Dionysus seated on a goat**

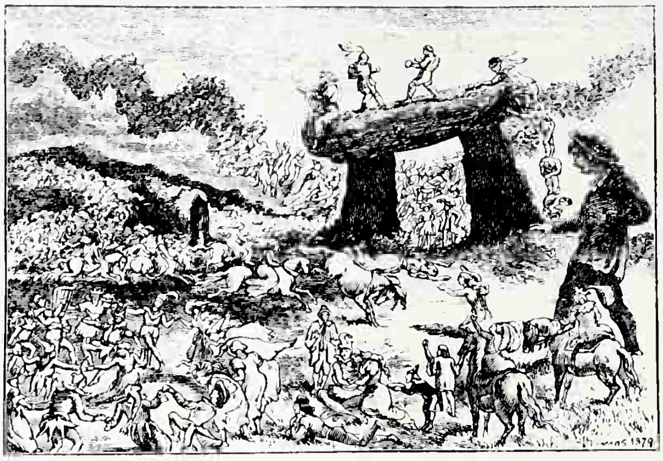
THE SYMBOL
OF THE ROSE
AND THE CROSS

Michael Busselle

Michael Holford

Goblins

Or hobgoblins, mischievous, and sometimes dangerous fairies or imps: descriptions of their behaviour in a house, rapping on walls, breaking crockery, clattering pots and pans, whisking bedclothes off sleepers, frequently resemble accounts of poltergeist phenomena: a way of getting rid of one is to sprinkle flax seed on the floor.
See FAIRIES.



GODIVA

ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS GODGIFU, Godiva was the wife of Earl Leofric of Mercia, one of the four powerful earls who ruled England under King Canute in the 11th century; Godiva herself owned extensive lands in six Midland counties. The most valuable of these estates was Coventry, consisting of more than 60 farms, and both she and her husband were buried in the Abbey there which they founded to replace an earlier religious house destroyed by the Danes. Godiva was warmly praised by ecclesiastical writers for her piety, wisdom and generous gifts to the Church, and is remembered with affection as the founder and benefactor of Coventry. The date of her death has recently been established as 10 September 1067.

Her fame rests chiefly on the story of her ride, naked, through the town in order to persuade her husband to free Coventry from a burdensome tax. The earliest versions of this are in two Latin Chronicles by monks of St Albans Abbey, one of the late 12th century by Roger of Wendover and the other of the early 13th by Matthew Paris. These tell how Leofric, angered by his wife's continual entreaties on the people's behalf, declared he would only do as she wished if she rode naked from one side of the market-place to the other when all the people were assembled there. On a certain day she carried out this condition, covered only by her long fair hair, and returned rejoicing to her husband, who regarded it as a miracle that she was seen by none. He granted a charter to free Coventry as he had promised.

There are two brief references to this Godiva story from the 15th century, one in a window in Holy Trinity church (now lost), and the other in a rhyme pinned to the church door by rebels protesting against excessive taxes in 1495. A local version of the story from the 16th century by Richard Grafton, a printer and Member of Parliament for Coventry, explains the apparent miracle by the fact that Godiva first called on the leading men of Coventry to keep all the people off the streets with doors and windows shut as she rode past, and that because of the love and gratitude they felt for her they did as she asked.

Godiva as Lady of Coventry would herself be responsible for taxes, but the Earl of Mercia had the duty of collecting the much hated *heregeld*, a tax which in Canute's time paid for the king's Danish bodyguard. It was repealed in 1051, and before this the Earls could occasionally grant remission of it, so that there is nothing inherently improbable in this part of the tale. The incident of Peeping Tom, telling how a foolish man tried to see Godiva and was struck blind for his temerity, is not found before the late 17th century, and does not occur in the popular ballad on the ride of 1650. The claims of Robert Graves, Lewis Spence and others that the story preserves the memory of a pagan rite, where a naked woman representing a goddess appeared to the people, depend largely on the blinding of Peeping Tom, since this falls into line with various tales of the human who trespasses on the secrets of the supernatural world and is punished accordingly. These claims do not seem to be justified, either from the literary evidence or from what is known of the pre-Christian religion of north-western Europe in early times.

First Played by a Boy

There is little doubt, however, that the story of Godiva has been influenced by various types of folktale, such as those of the husband who imposes an ordeal on his wife when she wants to help the poor, the cunning maid who solves the riddle by fulfilling apparently impossible conditions, and the noble heroine miraculously saved from public shame. Christian folklore may have some influence also, and memories of the figure of Eve, who appeared at the Corpus Christi festival associated with the Coventry Miracle Plays before the Reformation, may have resulted in the demand for the introduction of Godiva into the later pageants.

The annual fair and procession at Coventry was revived after the Restoration, and Godiva first appeared represented by a boy in 1678. After this her part was played by a woman, usually a minor actress or dancer from outside Coventry, and her appearances caused much speculation and controversy beforehand and never failed to draw large crowds: Peeping Tom also appeared in the procession, and at one time was played by a man in a little house on a wagon, popping his head out with comic gestures to amuse the people. There is evidence also for the wooden figure still to be seen in the Leofric Hotel in Coventry being carried in the procession, decked out in a wig and cocked hat and regularly painted for the occasion. It is a wooden figure over six feet high, in armour of early Tudor times, and is probably the figure seen by a visitor to Coventry in 1679, who was told that a statue which he saw there represented the man struck blind for trying to see Godiva. This sounds like a local joke, perhaps based on the anguished expression and blank eyes of the wooden figure. The Coventry Peeping Tom was so popular that several copies of him still survive.

Godiva last appeared in the pageant of 1692, and in 1967, on the anniversary of her death, there was a service in the Cathedral and various ceremonies to mark the occasion. Study of the evidence suggests that the story of her ride is a genuine local tradition going back to Anglo-Saxon times, based on some historical incident which has developed under the influence of folktales, and been kept alive by the regular processions at the Coventry Fair. It may be that Godiva performed some act of penance on her husband's behalf and appeared bereft of the usual marks of rank as a sign of humility and penitence. It is known that Leofric was hostile towards the Church in early life, but later reconciled with it under the influence of his wife and their confessor, the Prior of Worcester. Such an act may have been exaggerated into an account of her riding naked, and become popularly associated with her efforts to free them from a grievous tax. It is difficult now to establish the exact nature of her service to her people, but the traditional story of her deed, of great interest to folklorists as well as to historians, has also proved an inspiration to poets, novelists, playwrights, painters and sculptors, who have treated it sometimes romantically and sometimes satirically.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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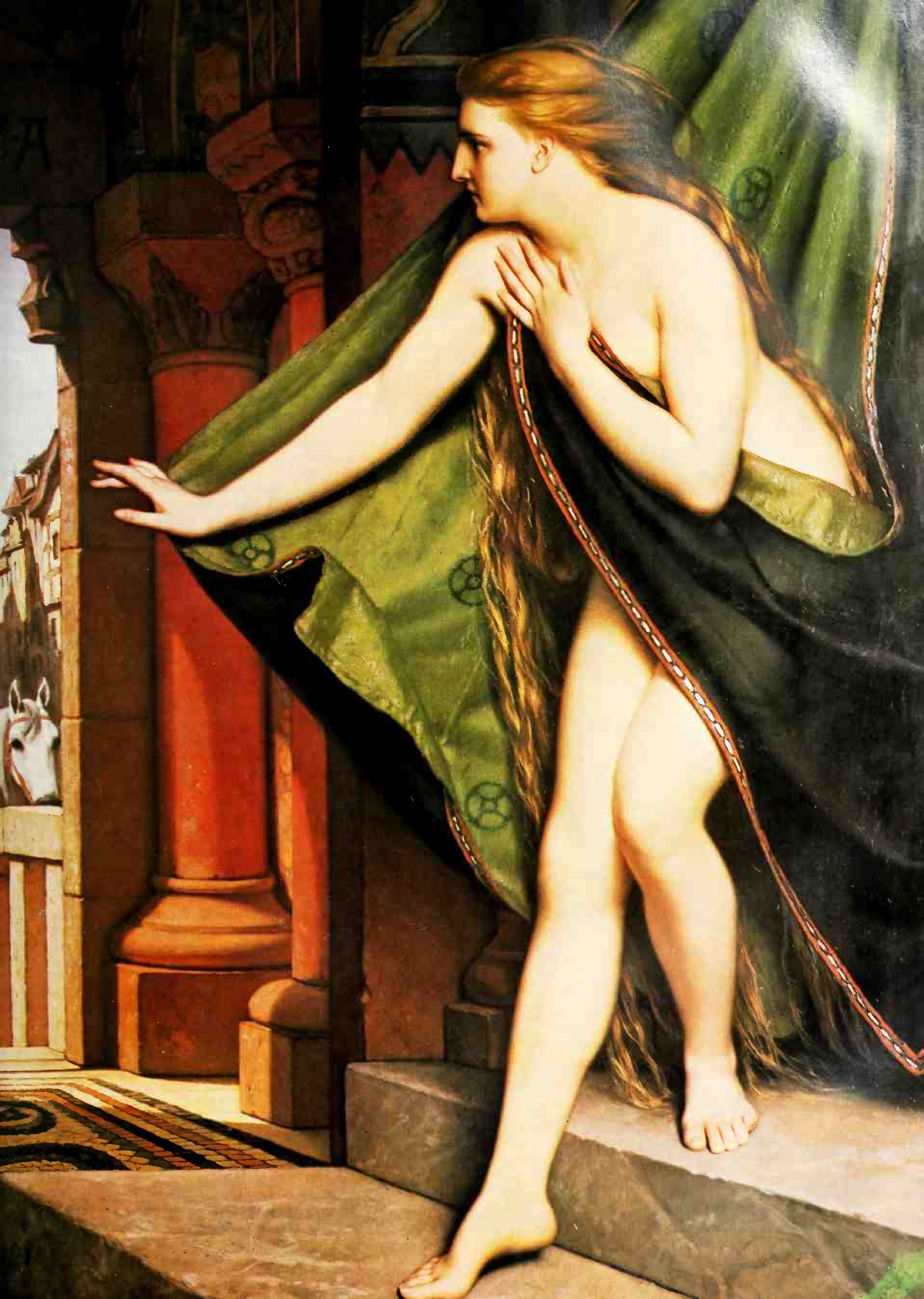
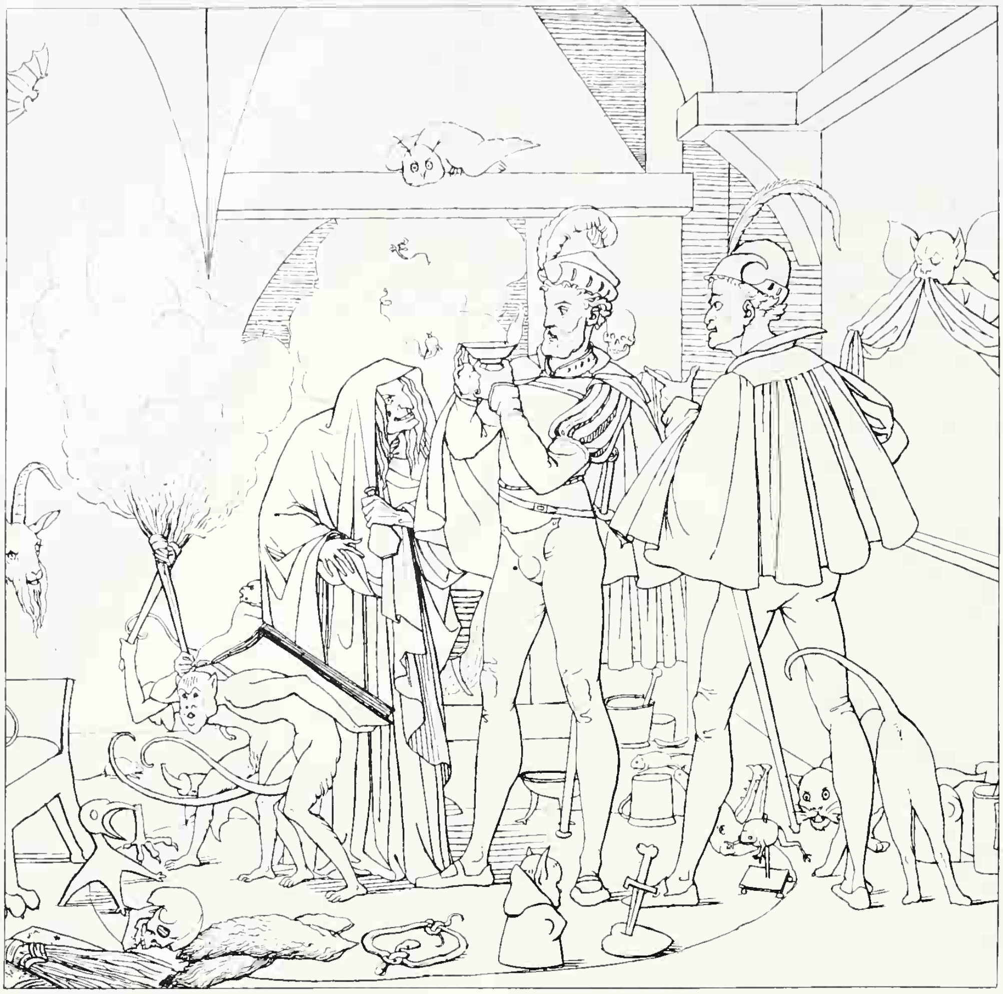
The earliest surviving story of Lady Godiva's still famous ride dates from the late 12th century, within 100 years of her death: *The Self-Sacrifice of Lady Godiva* by J. Van Lerius





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At the age of 81 Goethe said that he had at last discovered the only sect to which he could wish to belong: the Hypsisterians of the 4th century who revered the best in all religions

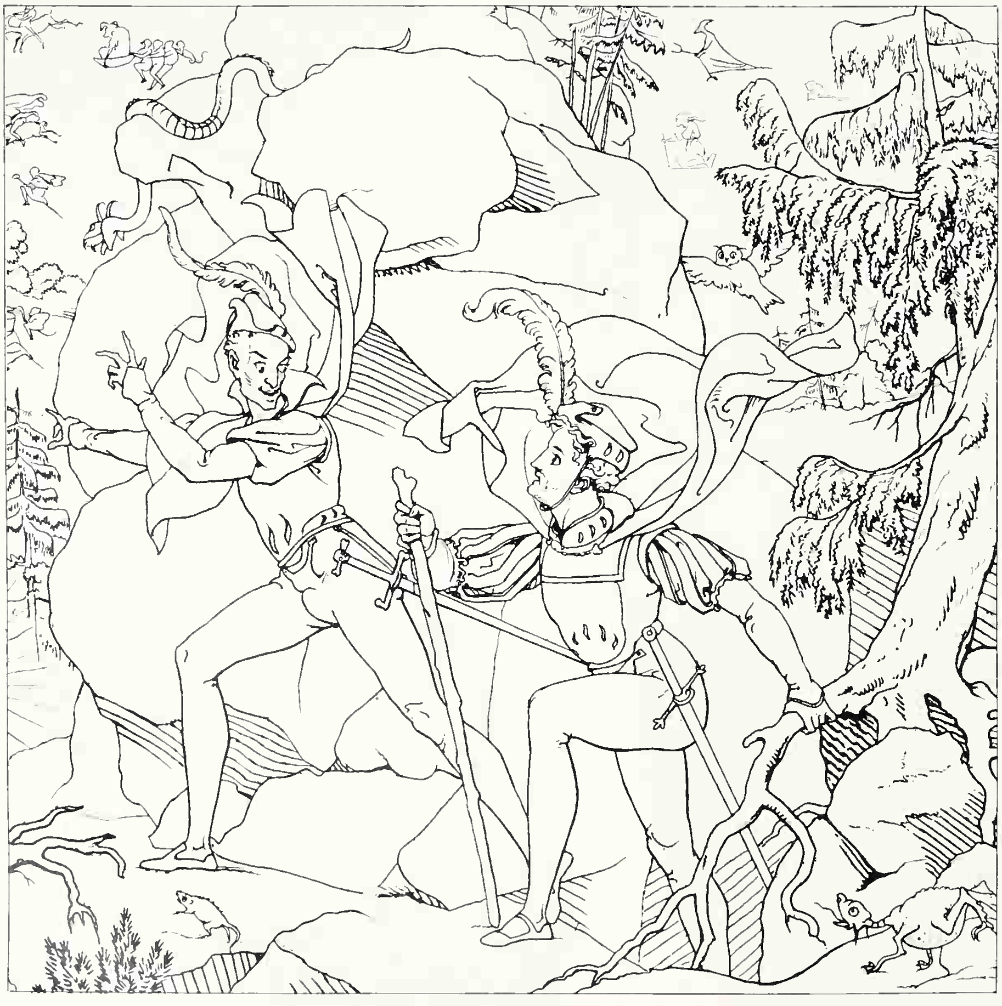
GOETHE

FEW POETS can have had more practical repercussions than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), not just in the sense of effects upon the private or public conduct of individuals (the testimony of Albert Schweitzer is but one among many) but also in the sense of organizations or institutions inspired by his thought. One has only to recall the foundation of a world-wide Anthroposophical Society by Rudolf Steiner (distinguished mathematician and editor of Goethe's writings on natural science – see STEINER), or of the Institute of Botany in the University of Mainz directed by Wilhelm Troll on Goethean principles, or of the many acknowledgements to Goethe by adherents of Gestalt psychology. No wonder T. S. Eliot could incline to the view that Goethe was more of a thinker than a poet!

Which was more responsible for his influence is still a matter of debate. There are those who argue that but for his prestige as a poet no one today would be interested in his thought. Others treat the whole canon of his work, poetry no less than prose, as a kind of lay Bible from which to cull snippets of life-wisdom. Yet others explain the power of his scientific as well as his poetic works by reducing them to some few powerful insights gleaned from his youthful dabblings in alchemy, astrology and other occult 'sciences'.

The case of Goethe the Scientist is altogether a very strange one. Why has he not been relegated to an object for dispassionate scrutiny by historians of science? How is it that he can still provoke impassioned and even acrimonious attack, or sympathetic interest, where not outright defence, from many who are by no means to be dismissed as cranks (the physicists Max Planck and Werner Heisenberg, for example)? Presumably because his probing, if undismayed, gaze was turned upon an issue which has become urgent in our own day: the double-facedness of man's inventive curiosity, the seemingly inextricable involvement of his impulse to make and to know with his impulse to power and the control of Nature.

It is an insight which informs the whole of Goethe's dramatic treatment of the Faust legend (see FAUST), achieving its most poignant symbolization in the tragic events consequent upon his hero's otherwise admirable technological project for the reclamation of land from the sea. For Faust's splendid vision of a community of



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Goethe's *Faust* presents 'the tensions inherent in the whole history of Western man's endeavours' but this 19th century German illustrator was evidently more interested in romantic horrors: Faust drinking the witch's potion *(above)*, Mephistopheles and Faust pursuing a Will-o-the-Wisp *(below)*

free people, earning their freedom each day anew on this hard-won land – a vision quoted so often out of context and in support of such disparate political ends – is made to follow, not only upon his abjuration of magic in the shape of Mephisto's help, but upon his own blinding by Dame Care, an evident projection of his guilty conscience.

Is this an ironic acknowledgement of man's inveterate tendency to gloss even his most disreputable motives with the veneer of respectability? Or is it a sober recognition that even his highest endeavours are prompted by mixed motives, some of them worse, but some also better, than he knows at the time? Probably both. The general tenor at any rate coincides with Goethe's maxim that 'whatever emancipates the mind without giving us control over ourselves is dangerous'. Such a warning could, and probably did, have reference to dangers contingent upon the control over the universe which man has acquired through the predictive power of Newtonian science. But it is by no means confined to these. For all his polemic against Newton (which by no means precluded recognition of his genius), it is only by a prejudicial selection of evidence that Goethe could ever be accommodated to such anti-Newtonians as, say, William Blake. Or to any romantic Jeremiahs, old or new, whose proposals for 'an alternative society' are confined to such products of the creative imagination as poetry, art and myth.

For Goethe, science too, whether pure or applied, was no less a product of man's Promethean reach. He may have said in a much-quoted aphorism that man's appropriate stance before the unknowable is to explore the explorable and quietly revere the inexplorable. But he offset this by another in which he insisted that man must persist in his belief that the incomprehensible may yet be susceptible of comprehension, for otherwise he would cease to explore.

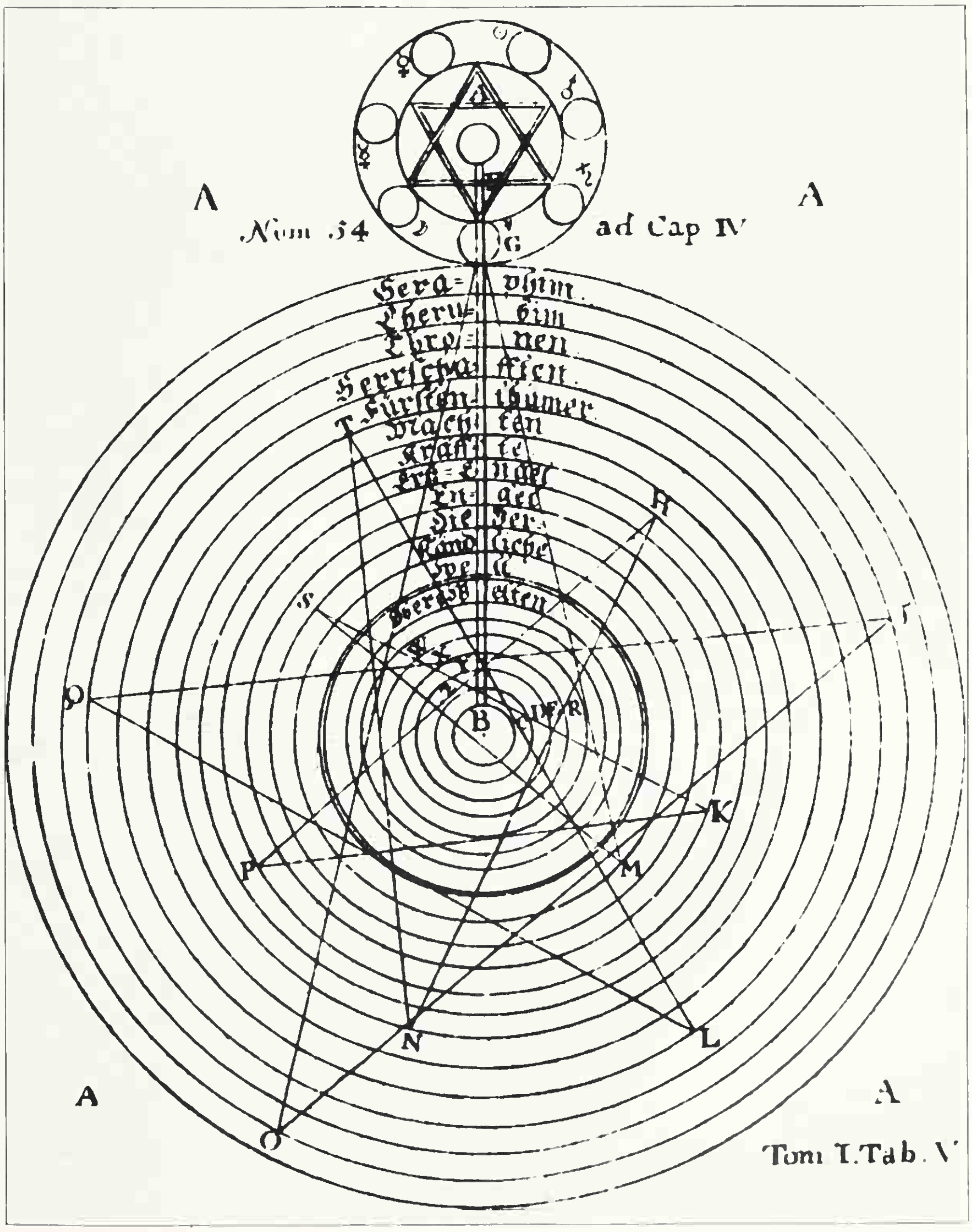
The Whole Man

Clearly no single factor is adequate to account for the manifold influence of anyone so complex. One reason for it must obviously be his power to transmute an immensely wide range of thought, as well as feeling, into an astonishing variety of matchless verse and prose: it is this which puts him into the select company of the world's greatest poets. Yet another is his openness to an immense variety of cultural traditions, of the East as well as of the West – theological, philosophic, scientific, mythological, alchemical, cabalistic – and his power to 'condense' their perennial truths into symbols of inexhaustible potency. It is this which has attracted the attention of C. G. Jung and his followers, enabling them on the one hand to enlist him in support of their notion of a 'collective unconscious', on the other to shed new light, out of their therapeutic experience, on the more esoteric aspects of works such as *Faust* (the circularity of the procedure has not gone unremarked).

A third reason for Goethe's continuing influence must undoubtedly be the time through which he lived. Born just before the meridian of the 18th century into the heyday of European Enlightenment, he was not to die until the various phases of Romanticism had come and gone, the political face of Europe been completely changed by revolution and reaction, and Western man was clearly headed for the technological era in which we now live. To all these changes he responded, not without misgivings, but with an unfailing curiosity and an essentially forward-looking commitment. What, rising 80, would he have most liked to live to see? The completion of such great technological projects as the Suez and Panama canals. And what was the humane ideal proposed in his great two-part novel about education and self-education, *Wilhelm Meister*? Not the Renaissance ideal of the many-sided man according to which he himself had been raised, but one more attuned to the modern world; how to educate 'whole men' in an age committed to one-sided specialization. Goethe has been called 'the last universal man'. But Oscar Wilde was right too in calling him 'the first of the Moderns'.

The world into which he was born marks a decisive phase in the long transition from the God-centred world of medieval times to the man-centred universe of our own. It was then that Western man, putting his trust in the knowledge which his own reasoning can furnish, decided to stand on his own feet and work out his salvation for himself. A decision asserted not with that sense of sinful pride which haunted the Great Renaissance figures, and found dramatic embodiment in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. Rather with a modest confidence which trusted that the progressive enlightenment of men's minds would bring about a decrease in man's inhumanity to man.

The pattern of the universe, from Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum*, a popular 18th century work which influenced Goethe in his treatment of the famous *Faust* legend. At the top of the diagram is the throne of the Splendour of God, surrounded by the seven planets. Below is the 'middle world' consisting of the 12 circles or choruses of innumerable spirits and angelic hosts. At the centre are the seven circles of the inner world, with Satan (at point B) in the middle



Flight to the South

The only period in his life when Goethe was tempted to take older modes of thought literally, was brief. It lasted at most from the autumn of 1768 to the summer of 1770. Returned from the 'rationalistic' University of Leipzig with a severe physical complaint (from which he was apparently cured through the secret, and alchemically derived, salt of a Pietistic doctor) he remained throughout that winter confined to his room in a state of psychosomatic depression. And open by both temperament and environment to supernatural experiences – his maternal grandfather claimed the gift of second sight, and passed on to him his interest in the interpretation of dreams, while he himself as a boy had erected in his room an altar to 'The Unknown God' – the disillusioned and despairing youth felt drawn to such possibly mind-enlarging experiences as alchemy, astrology, and the mystical rites and rituals proffered by a Pietistic relative, Fräulein von Klettenberg. To a revolutionary and cynically minded young man the central gospel of Pietism, with its reassertion of Luther's claim that every human soul has the right to direct communication with God without benefit of clergy, could not fail to appeal.

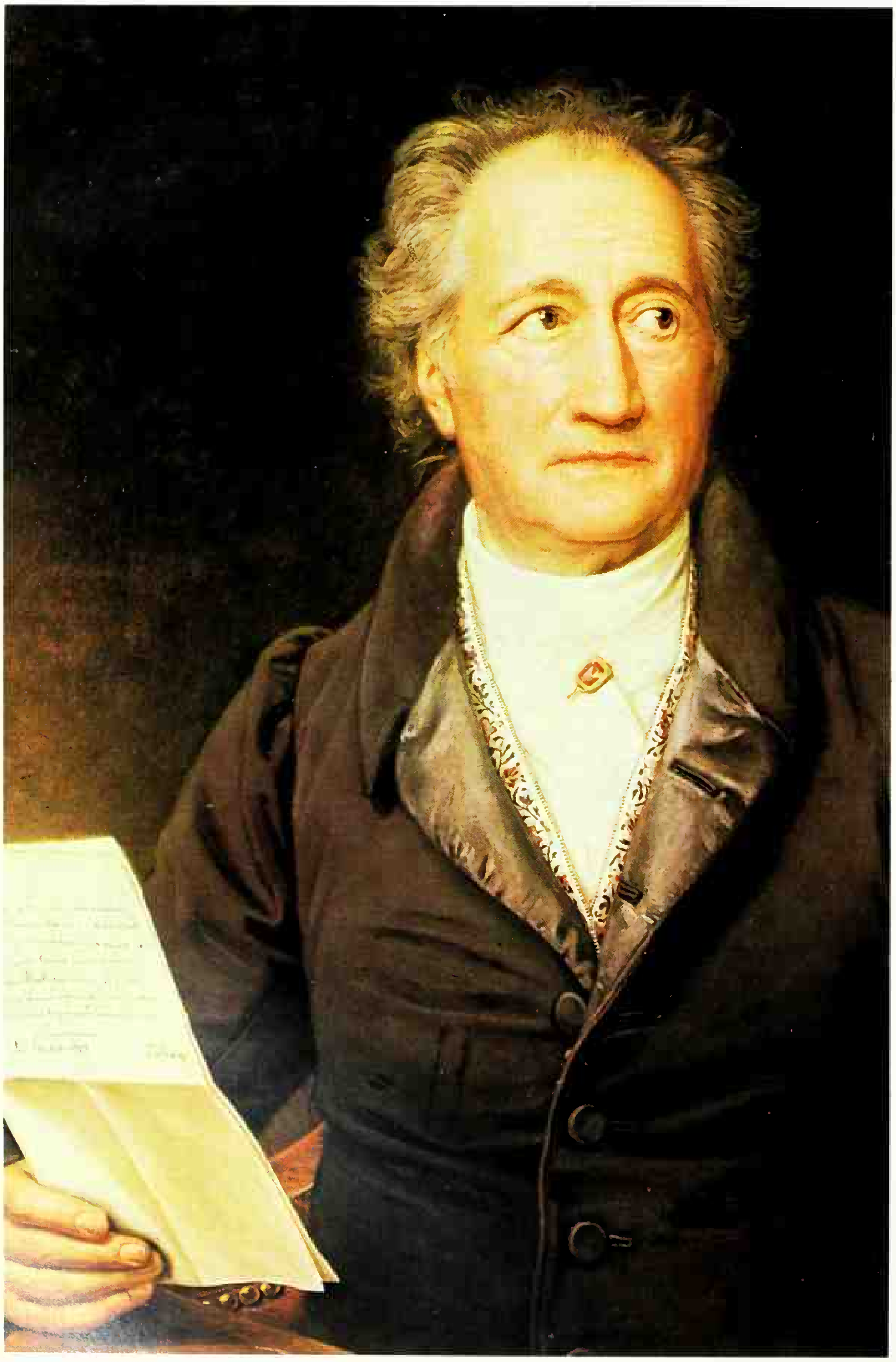
Three stages may be distinguished in Goethe's emancipation from any desire to take literally either the procedures of the occult sciences or the doctrines of any religion. The first and most decisive was his encounter with J. G. Herder in Strasbourg, where he went to resume his studies in 1770. Rightly regarded as one of the progenitors of European Romanticism, Herder was nevertheless a man of the Enlightenment: a stickler for distinctions in both thought and language, rigorously schooled in classical rhetoric as well as in theology, a pioneer in comparative religion as well as in the origins of language and the history of ideas. Among the many lessons he taught Goethe, the most unforgettable were the need to inspect his own mental processes, as both man and artist, and the danger of confusing contexts of thought and modes of discourse.

The second stage was Goethe's lifelong and patient devotion to a number of observational and experimental sciences, which he somehow managed to pursue alongside both his literary activities and the manifold ministerial duties which devolved upon him as friend and general factotum of the Duke of Weimar: mineralogy and geology, botany and zoology, optics and theory of colour, meteorology and theory of clouds. And the third stage was his flight from the ten-year long burden of administrative duties, and from an increasingly frustrating love-affair, to the clear skies of the Mediterranean, cradle of our Western civilization. This flight he repeatedly described as a process of rebirth and self-discovery. It brought not only the completion or promotion of poetic works which had long been hanging fire, but the precipitation of scientific discoveries he had long been on the verge of making. It brought above all an understanding of the archetypal, whether in Nature or in man. And hence, a new attitude to myth.

The clearest evidence of this is in his essentially 'modern' treatment of Greek myth in his verse drama *Iphigenia*, portraying as it does man's power to free himself from the tyranny of his myths by recognizing them as projections of his unconscious needs, fears and insights. In Goethe's version the curse laid upon the race of Tantalus – the seemingly inexorable chain of violence and vengeance, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' and worse – is lifted, not by the intervention of any deity, but by the painfully acquired power of human beings to 'read' the oracle aright, and to put their faith in truth and trust between man and man.

Alchemy and Astrology

All this is not to say that Goethe henceforth lost interest in myth and magic, in religion or occultism. Far from it. Whenever the need arose – whether for his poetic works, his autobiography, or that historical prelude to his *Theory of Colours* which some have claimed as the first history of science – he again had recourse to the whole body of Pansophic knowledge, most of it familiar to him from his youth: Paracelsus, Boehme, Bruno, Pico, Ficino, Kepler, Swedenborg, the anonymous *Aurea catena Homeri*, not



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Portrait of Goethe: he once said that man should explore the explorable and quietly revere the inexplorable, but he also insisted that man must persist in trying to understand the incomprehensible, for otherwise he would cease to explore

to mention such widely read 18th century works as Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum* or Gottfried Arnold's *Unbiassed History of the Church and its Heretics* and *History of Mystical and Symbolic Theology*. But there was no longer any question of his writing, as he did to a friend in January 1769: 'The Saviour has got me at last!'. Or in the next year to Fräulein von Klettenberg 'Chemistry is still my secret passion'.

Chemistry is, after all, itself a kind of 'magic', destroying as it does the familiar perceptual world in order to reveal a world of relations hitherto unsuspected. Alchemy, by contrast, unless interpreted symbolically, is essentially superstition: a misuse of the genuine and the true, a mendacious flattering of man's hopes and desires.

Astrology likewise. Its mumbo-jumbo, satirized by Mephisto in *Faust* was in Goethe's view one of many examples of the false application of mathematics; and his attempt at casting his own horoscope at the beginning of his autobiography is distinctly ironical in tone. On the other hand, the possibility of scientific validation of the age-old belief in the connection between all living things and the subtle rhythms of cosmic origin is never ruled out: it received poetic tribute in the opening verse of his *Orphic Utterances* and in the figure of the wise woman, Makarie, in *Wilhelm Meister*, scrutinizing the heavens from her astronomer's tower.

Altogether this was the older Goethe's way: not to deny early experiences, but to put them in perspective. It is a temper which informs the whole of his autobiography, and accounts for its title *Poetry and Truth*. The hesitant gropings of his youth are recalled with a tender regard for the reality of all genuinely felt experience, but also with the 'physical distance' won through the ever widening experiences of a long life. He never indulges in irony for its own sake. What he does do is to strip away the attachment to the letter found in fundamentalists of whatever persuasion in order to get to the kernel of a sacramental view of life wherever it is to be found. It is this essentially syncretic endeavour – the desire to find what is common without obliterating differences – that inspires all Goethe's utterances about religion: his great Eastern ballads, *The God and the Bayadère* and *Pariah*; that most mystical lyric of his cycle *The West-Eastern Divan*, 'Ecstatic Yearning'; and his unfinished poem *The Mysteries*. It is this that inspires his treatment of comparative religion, whether in *Wilhelm Meister*, or in the Fourth Book of his autobiography. It is this that could make him say at the age of 81 that he had at last discovered the only sect to which he could wish to belong: the 4th century Hypsisterians, whose whole endeavour was to revere the best in all religions, whether Christian, Jewish or heathen.

These Serious Jests

The poetic use Goethe made of the diverse cultural materials he inherited varied from work to work. And if we concentrate too much on the materials themselves, or on their sources, we run the risk of missing the new import he intended to convey through the artistic form he devised. It is above all with *Faust* that the inadequacy of any single key becomes most apparent. Goethe's characterization of the Second Part, in the last letter of his life, as 'these profoundly serious jests' applies to the whole of the work. And the whole of it lights up in a new way once we are aware of the immense variety of historical traditions that have gone to its making: theological and philosophical, scientific and literary, as well as mythological, mythical or mystagogical. Much can indeed be revealed about the psycho-symbolic significance of certain figures by bringing alchemical knowledge to bear. But we do well not to overlook Goethe's historical allusions: to the scientific controversies of his day between Neptunists and Vulcanists about the origins of life; or to the great sinners of the New Testament, the three Marys, who also play their part among the many who intercede for the salvation of Faust's soul. Or miss the anticipatory power of his symbols – whether it be our knowledge that during its nine months in the womb the human embryo 'condenses' all the stages of evolution; or that scientists themselves are now plunging into the oceanic depths in order to discover more about man's own humble origins; or that the trend towards 'unisex' may betoken a new readiness towards reciprocal exchange of the masculine and feminine principles of the psyche.

For what Goethe was attempting in *Faust* was neither a rival to that of his greatest predecessor, Marlowe, nor the creation of a new myth. It was rather the dramatic presentation of the tensions inherent in the whole history of Western man's endeavours: his triumphs and his failures, and the constant threat that he may destroy himself. And if he decided to 'save' the soul of his constantly erring anti-hero, it was not as a reward for either his 'innate virtue' or his 'ceaseless striving', though both played their part. But rather the redeeming grace of 'love from above', under which complex notion Goethe comprised all the manifold symbols the human mind has conceived in order to give expression to the hope that, for all his transgressions, man may yet be enabled to survive.

Goethe summed up his outlook to a reviewer of his *Theory of Colour* in a letter of November, 1812: that since men are all too prone to have recourse to the magical, the unfathomable, the inexpressible, he himself had determined in all his work – poetic, artistic or scientific – to give prominence to the clear rather than the opaque, to the rational rather than the vaguely intuitive, so that in giving form to the outward the inward might be tacitly revered.

L. A. WILLOUGHBY

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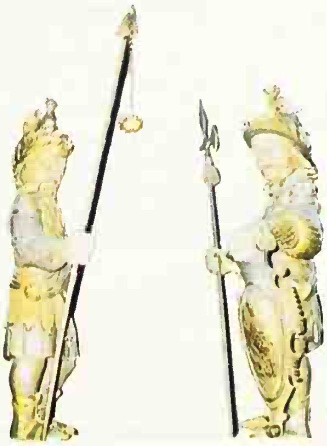

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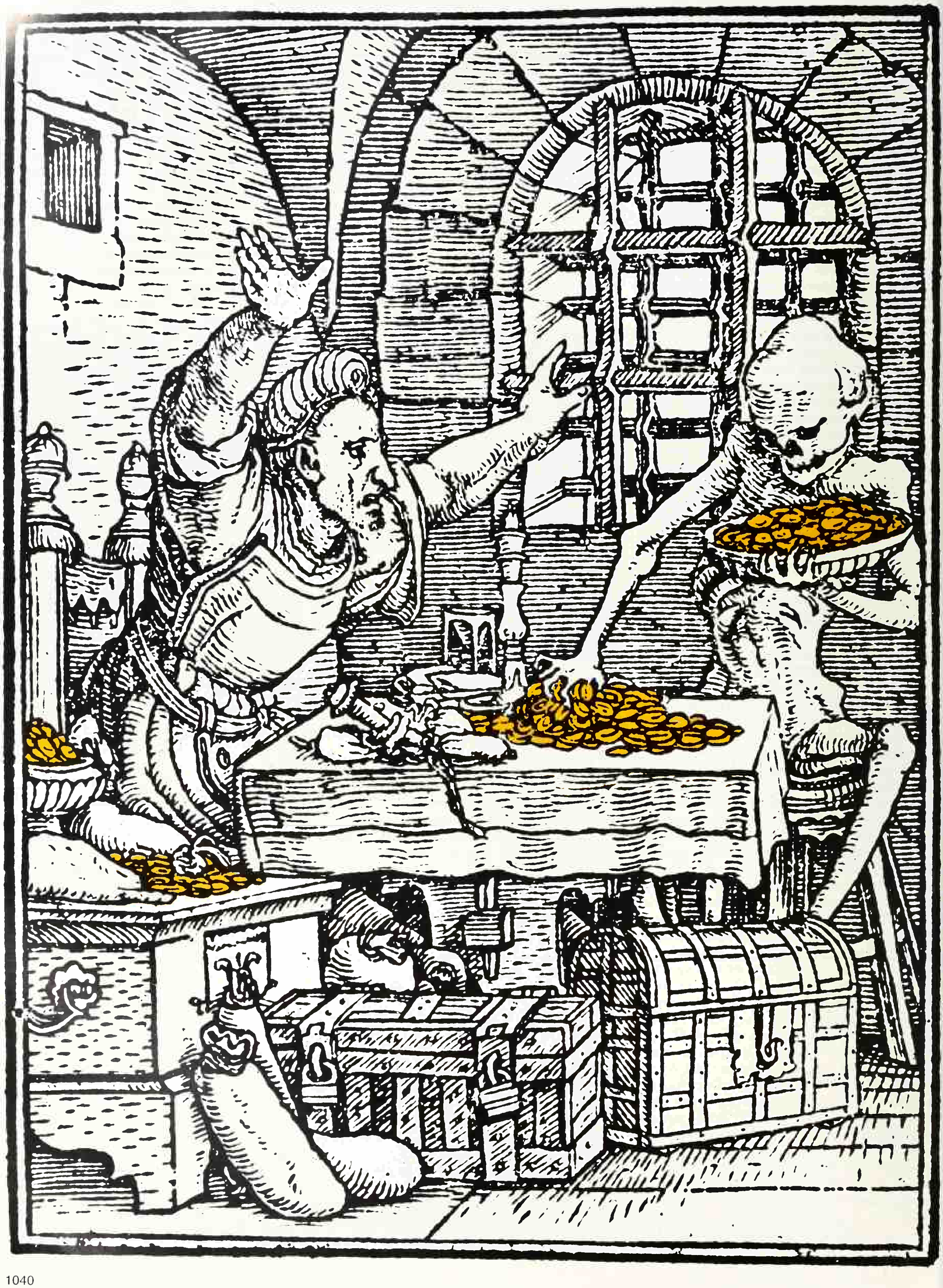
Gog and Magog

The names of two mythical giants, statues of which now stand in the Guildhall, London: according to legend, Gog and Magog were the last survivors of a race of British giants overcome by Brutus, who had them taken to London where they were compelled to work as porters at the gates of the royal palace: in the Bible, Gog is described as a terrible ruler living in the north, and in the Apocalypse the terms Gog and Magog stand for all the enemies of the kingdom of God.

See GIANTS.



GOLD

CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT human istory, from the earliest of the known ivilizations, gold has been treasured and alued in its physical substance and also as a ymbol of something of equivalent value and arity in the mental and spiritual life of man.

The following description by Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD) of the properties of this metal can be read equally easily both in the ense of the material metal and as an nalogy for the qualities of the intangible quivalent buried in the hearts of men:

> It alone of all substances loses nothing on heating and survives even conflagrations and the funeral pyre. In fact, the oftener it is heated the better . . . the best proof of purity is a high melting point. It is strange, too, that a substance subdued by charcoal, made from the most fiercely-burning wood, is swiftly heated by the chaff, and that is fused with lead to purify it . . . . Another reason for holding gold in esteem is that it is least worn away by use . . . Again, nothing can be beaten into thinner leaves, nor divided more finely . . . Above all, it alone is found in nuggets of fine dust . . .
>
> Finally, neither rust nor verdigris can waste its excellence or diminish its weight. Again, brine and vinegar, the conquerors of matter, make no impression on it.

From this passage, it is plain to see why old in its physical form is used, through ll known cultures in human history to epresent light, riches, wisdom, excellence, he essence and elixir of life, and stands or what has been called the 'irreducible minimum in the human spirit'. One can see, oo, why it stands as a central symbol in the eligious traditions – as the golden sun tands at the centre of our physical universe, iving life and light. In the magical system of orrespondences, gold is indeed linked with he sun (see CORRESPONDENCES).

The Greek writer Hesiod relates that at he beginning of time the Olympian gods first reated the men of Gold, who lived like gods n unalloyed happiness. In the Christian ativity story the Magi brought gold as one f the offerings to the infant Jesus and in Christian symbolism gold represents the ivine spirit, glory, joy and love.

In our own culture, and not necessarily nked to any form of religion, gold stands for erfection in such phrases as: 'the golden ge', 'the golden mean', 'the golden rule'.

The Perfect Metal

n the folklore of all cultures there are stories n which gold is the lure and prize, as in the ecurring tale of the remote city – be it El Dorado, Timbuktu, or many others – where the streets are paved with gold, and n which there is wealth beyond dreams.

Nothing, of course, is consistently lucky nd good – it depends who you are and what re your motives. So it is not surprising to nd that on the other side of the coin, gold an symbolize greed, temptation, corruptiility, waste and treason. The tale of King Midas, who was punished for his greed by verything he touched turning into gold, is an example of what can happen if the user's intentions are baser than the precious metal.

Eric Cross

As well as standing for perfection and riches, both earthly and spiritual, gold also symbolizes greed and temptation *Left* A miser is dispossessed of his gold by the skeletal figure of Death: from the *Dance of Death*, a series of woodcuts by Holbein *Above* Sarcophagus made of 22 carat gold, which contained the mummified body of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen

Naturally there is much day-to-day folklore associated with gold as well. Even today, it is thought by many people that a gold bead worn round the neck will prevent or cure a host of ailments – anything from a sore throat to scrofula. It was also believed to protect the wearer from drowning; in the past, British sailors often wore plain gold ear-rings as amulets. In connection with this use of gold for magical reasons, it is significant that the magician reserves gold for the highest and most ceremonial magics.

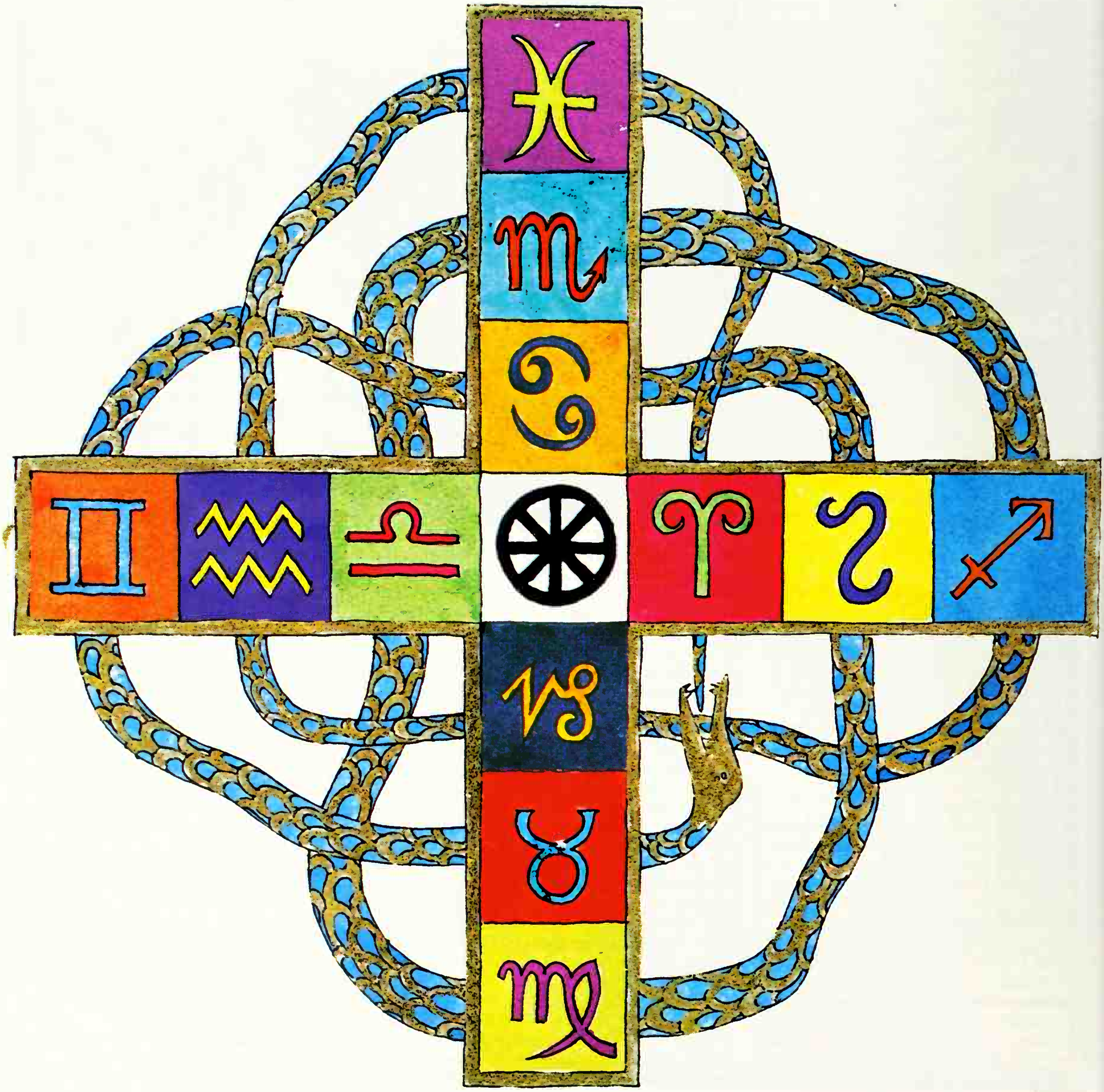
The vast literature of alchemy is concerned with the transmutation of baser metals into gold, both in the literal sense and as a symbol of the development of the alchemist himself. Alchemy as practised since the 8th century bears the stamp of Jabir ibn Hayyan, surnamed El-Sufi (known in the West as Geber), who propounded the theory that all metals are composed of two principles resembling sulphur and mercury. He accounted for the existence of different varieties of metals by assuming that these two principles are not always pure and that they do not always combine in the same proportion; when this is the case, the result is silver, lead, tin, iron or copper. When, however, the sulphurous and mercurial principles are perfectly pure and combine in perfect balance, the result is gold.

The idea that in both a scientific and a metaphorical sense gold represents the sum of perfection occurs also in a 13th century work *Speculum Alchemae* (Mirror of Alchemy) which is attributed to Roger Bacon, the English philosopher and scientist: 'I must tell you that Nature always intends and strives to the perfection of Gold: but many accidents, coming between, change the metals.'

(See also ALCHEMY; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

PAT WILLIAMS

ORDER OF THE



GOLDEN DAWN

Many well-known people belonged to the Golden Dawn, which functioned as a kind of occult university in Britain in the 1890s. The Order's modernization of the Western tradition of ritual magic has exerted a lasting influence.

THE LIGHT OF THE TYPICAL modern occult society shines brightly for a little while before the group splinters into quarrelling and power-hungry factions and vanishes without trace. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was an exception. Founded in London in 1888, it attracted a very high-powered membership, enjoyed a vigorous life for a dozen years, and exerted a lasting influence on occult and New Age ideas and groups in the West. Israel Regardie (see REGARDIE), who was Aleister Crowley's secretary for a time and long afterwards published the Order's rituals, called it, 'the only [esoteric] Order of real worth that the West of our time has known.'

The Golden Dawn was founded when the tide of the 19th-century revival of interest in magic and the occult was rising high. Spiritualism was much in vogue. So was Freemasonry, which was attracting many new members. The Theosophical Society had opened a London branch in 1883 and Madame Blavatsky herself had settled in London in 1887 (see BLAVATSKY). Where the Theosophists were drawn principally to oriental religion and mysticism, the Golden Dawn emphasized the high magical tradition of the West, rediscovered in Europe during the Renaissance.

Chiefs and Secret Chiefs

The Order emerged from the world of fringe Masonry and purported to be a branch of a mysterious Rosicrucian order in Germany, though in fact the German group did not exist and the documents which linked the Golden Dawn with it were forged. One of the founders was a retired medical man, William Robert Woodman (1828-91), who was Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, known familiarly as the Soc. Ros. This obscure group, of which the novelist Bulwer Lytton (see LYTTON) had been Grand Patron, was interested in the Hermetica, the Cabala, the Rosicrucian tradition and Spiritualism. Another founder was a London doctor and coroner called William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925), who was a member of the Theosophical Society and succeeded Woodman as Supreme Magus of the Soc. Ros.

There was much impressive talk of awesomely mysterious 'Secret Chiefs', in line with the fondness of both Rosicrucians and Theosophists for 'Invisibles' or 'Masters' – great superhuman adepts from whom a group drew its authenticity and authority (see MASTERS). In reality, Westcott was the prime mover and the one who forged the Golden Dawn's founding documents, but he was soon eclipsed by his protégé, MacGregor Mathers, a more formidable chief than any Invisible. It was Mathers, more than any other single person, who made the Golden Dawn a success.

Samuel Liddell Mathers (1854-1918) was the son of a London clerk and was educated at the grammar school in Bedford. Forceful and commanding, of sternly military demeanour, he was an enthusiast for all things Celtic and an ardent Jacobite, who longed for the restoration of the Stuarts to the British throne. He called himself MacGregor Mathers because he liked to think that he was descended from that clan of romantic Scots outlaws. He also awarded himself the title of Comte de Glenstrae.

Light of Occult Knowledge

Initiation of Aleister Crowley into the Order of the Golden Dawn

He was waiting without the portal under the care of a sentinel while the Hierophant (Mathers), between the pillars and before the altar, addressed his chief officers and the assembled members. Crowley was clothed in a strange, feminine-looking robe with a hood over his head so that he couldn't see a thing, for the light of the natural world is but darkness compared with the radiance of Divine Light. And he was held by a triple cord, a token of nature's tie which bound him. A voice cried from within the Hall of Neophytes...'Child of Earth! wherefore hast thou come to request admission to this Order?'

A voice answered for him. 'My soul is wandering in the Darkness seeking for the light of Occult Knowledge, and I believe that in this Order the Knowledge of that Light may be obtained.'

John Symonds *The Great Beast*

In 1890 he married Moina Bergson (1865-1928), sister of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. The new Mrs Mathers had studied art in London at the Slade School. She met Mathers in the British Museum, where she was studying Egyptian art, and was involved with the Golden Dawn from an early stage.

Mathers was genuinely learned in the Cabala and he published editions of *The Key of Solomon* and other grimoires (see CABALA; GRIMOIRES). He was also a friend both of Madame Blavatsky and of Anna Kingsford (see ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY).

University of Magic

Westcott, Woodman and Mathers were the three Chiefs – the visible ones at least – of the new order. The Golden Dawn was intended from the outset to be a secret society, restricted to an elite membership and concentrating on the Western magical tradition. It was Mathers who wrote the Order's rituals and much of the teaching material which was distributed to its members. In the process he constructed a coherent magical system which embraced the Hermetic and Gnostic texts of the early centuries, the Cabala, the Tarot, alchemy, astrology and divination, Rosicrucian and Masonic symbolism and ritual magic. The system also emphasized the psychological factors in magic as a technique of self-development. It was a brilliant achievement and one which gave the Golden Dawn profound influence on subsequent occult groups.

Recruitment of members began in 1888 and by the end of 1891 more than 80 people, including 42 women, had been initiated into the Isis-Urania Temple in London, while branches had been established in Bradford (dedicated to Osiris) and at Weston-super-Mare (Horus), where the borough treasurer was an occultist. An Edinburgh temple of Amen-Ra was founded in 1893. By 1896 the Golden Dawn had recruited 315 members, of whom 119 were women.

The original intention of the Order was 'to prosecute the Great Work; which is to

'Greek Cross of the Zodiac', drawn from a Golden Dawn manuscript: the zodiac signs converge on the wheel of the sun, and are linked by the coils of the snake biting its own tail, the *ouroboros*, a symbol that 'All is One'

The Angel Axir

From a ceremony of evoking the angel Axir by means of his magical signature (sigil) painted on a talisman (pentacle) and carried by the Magus:

Bind and veil Sigil with white cord and black cloth. Place it without the Circle at the West, and say:
Hail unto ye, Lords of the Land of Life, hear ye these my words for I am made as ye are, who are the formers of the soul. With the divine aid, I now purpose to call for this day and hour from the dark depths of my sphere of sensation the angel Axir of the Lesser Earthly Angle of the Northern Quadrangle, whose magical seal I now bind with the triple seal of bondage, and shroud in the black darkness of concealment. Even as I have bound about this Sigil this cord so let Axir be bound in his abode and habitation that he move not therefore save to manifest unto the Light before me. Even as with this veil of black I shroud the Light of Day from this Sigil, so do I render him in this place, blind and dumb, that he may in no wise move except into manifestation and appearance before me. And the reason of this working is to obtain from that Angel the true knowledge of Earth, how I may securely fix within my being the secret philosophical stone of creation whereupon is a hidden name inscribed. To this end I implore the divine assistance in the names of Adonai ha-Aretz, Auriel, Phorlach, Emor Dial Hectega, and Ic Zod Hed Chal.
Draw the Pentacle into the Circle with the point of the Sword.
Creature of Sigils, enter thou within this sacred Circle that the Angel Axir may pass from concealment into manifestation.
Consecrate immediately with Fire and with Water at the West of the Circle.
Creature of Sigils, purified and made consecrate, enter thou the Pathway of Evil.

Israel Regardie *The Golden Dawn*

The original intention of the Order was 'to prosecute the Great Work: which is to obtain control of the nature and power of my own being'

obtain control of the nature and power of my own being.' Candidates were required to declare a belief in a Supreme Being, who was not necessarily the same thing as the Christian God. The Golden Dawn functioned as a university of magic, teaching a thorough course in the theory and practice of the subject. Members studied the Tree of Life of the Cabala and the Twenty-Two Paths, the Tarot trumps, alchemy and astrology. They made their own magical equipment or 'weapons', explored the astral plane and performed the Order's stately and impressive rituals. They studied the Enochian language (see ENOCHIAN), cultivated clairvoyance and drew and examined their horoscopes.

Members took demanding examinations to work their way up the system of grades, or ranks, which had ten levels, corresponding to the ten sefiroth, or pathways to God, of the Tree of Life. The grades carried the new member from Neophyte at the bottom of the ladder up the rungs step by step to Adeptus Minor, Adeptus Major and Adeptus Exemptus. From there the ladder stretched on up to the dizzy heights of Magister, Magus and finally Ipsissimus ('Most Himself').

The Revolt of the Soul

The two members who were to make the greatest names for themselves in their very different ways were Aleister Crowley, of whom more later, and W.B. Yeats, the poet and future Nobel Prize winner, who joined the London temple in 1890, when he was 25. He had first encountered Mathers in the reading room of the British Museum, and thought him 'a figure of romance', though he later described him as 'half a lunatic, half knave'. Yeats was keenly interested in the occult revival, which in a telling phrase he described as 'the revolt of the soul against reason', and he would rise to high rank in the Golden Dawn (see YEATS).

Two writers of lesser reputation, Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood, belonged to the Golden Dawn later on. Other notable members included Maud Gonne, the Irish nationalist leader; Constance Wilde, the wife of Oscar Wilde; Allan Bennett, who became a leading figure in British Buddhism; the Scots writer William Sharp, an important figure in the Celtic Revival; and the painter Gerald Kelly, who was to end up as President of the Royal Academy (as well as being Aleister Crowley's brother-in-law).

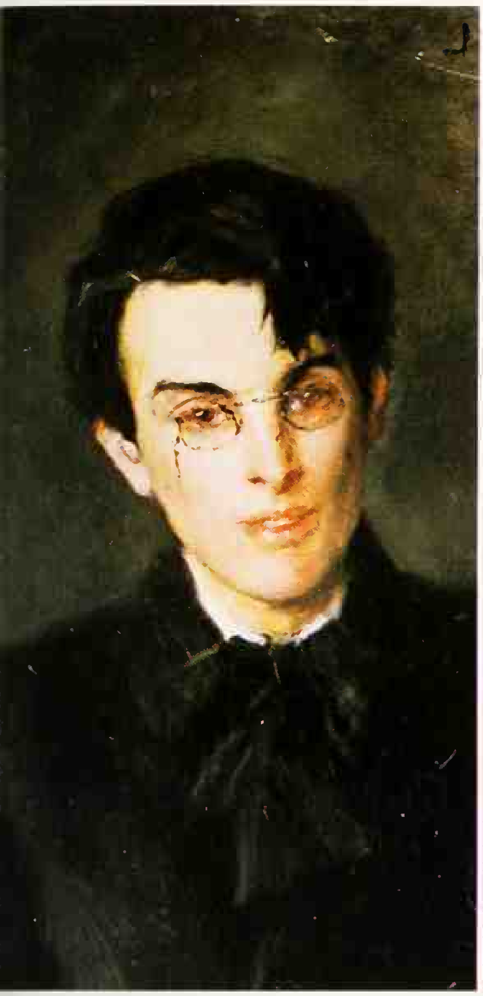
More important roles were played by the actress Florence Farr, a friend of Yeats and mistress of George Bernard Shaw, and Annie Horniman, daughter of a rich businessman, future founder and benefactor of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and friend of Moina Mathers as an art student. They both joined in 1890 and became the Golden Dawn's principal instructors in the carrying out of the rituals.

Mathers and Moina moved to Paris in 1892, leaving Westcott as Chief Adept in England. Mathers continued to demand the absolute obedience of the entire Order, but his absence caused unease and rifts began to appear in the lute. Annie Horniman had been generously supporting the Mathers menage financially, and consecrated their new Ahathoor temple in Paris, where ceremonies were enacted in honour of the goddess Isis, impersonated by Moina. In 1896 she fell out with Mathers, who she thought was spending too much time and energy on Jacobite matters at the expense of the Golden Dawn's work, and she stopped sending him money.

Discontent and Dispersion

Mathers, alarmed by hints of discontent in England, sent an arrogant message to the senior Golden Dawn members in London, demanding total submission to him as the Order's link with its Secret Chiefs, 'those Secret and Unknown Magi who are the concealed Rulers of the Wisdom of the True Rosicrucian Magic of Light'. These alarming beings, he said, he had seen only rarely in the flesh and did not know by their earthly names, though 'For my part I believe them to be human and living upon this earth; but possessing terrible superhuman powers.'

The members meekly submitted, but not Annie Horniman. She demurred and was expelled from the order by Mathers, ostensibly at the behest of the Secret Chiefs. Westcott left the order the following year because he feared for his coroner's job if his occult involvements became public knowledge. He was replaced as Chief Adept in England by Florence Farr, who was not up



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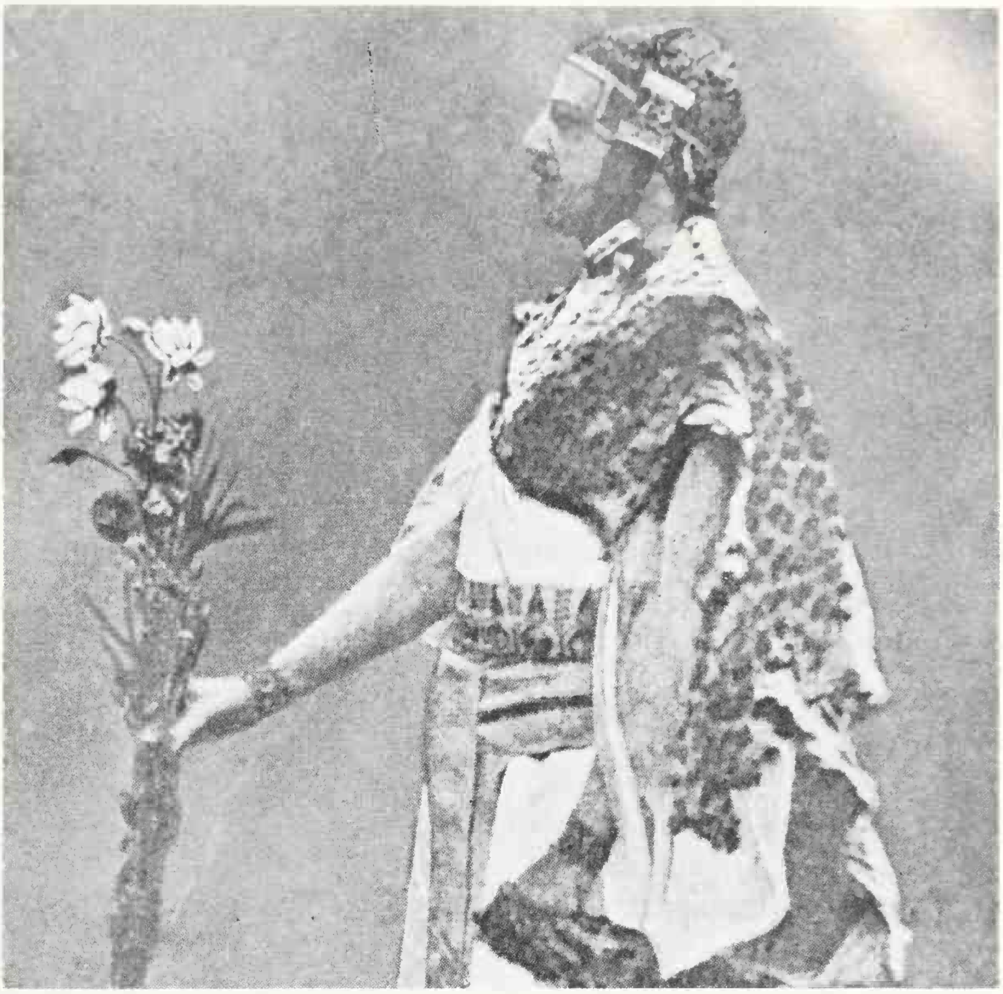


Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

W.B.Yeats *(left)* became leader of the London lodge after the expulsion of MacGregor Mathers *(right)*, the original driving force behind the Golden Dawn, who is seen here celebrating a Mass of Isis

to the job. Things began to slide badly, while in Paris Mathers was desperately short of money.

By 1900 Florence Farr was beginning to suggest that the Golden Dawn should be quietly wound up, at which Mathers suspected a plot to bring Westcott back to supplant him. He now revealed the truth of Westcott's forgeries of the early days, to the shock and consternation of the membership. Their misgivings were not eased when Mathers threatened them with 'a deadly and hostile Current of Will set in motion by the Chiefs of the Order', which would blast them like a flash of lightning and cause them 'to fall slain or paralysed without visible weapon'.

Envoy Extraordinary

More trouble was building up over the youthful Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY), who had been initiated into the order in 1898, fresh from Cambridge University. He had not yet emerged into public notoriety as the self-styled Great Beast 666 and 'the wickedest man in the world', but the senior London members regarded him as highly undesirable, because of his interest in sex magic, and blocked his progress up the ladder of the grades. Crowley went to Paris to see Mathers, who conferred the desired promotion on him, but the London temple refused to recognize it.

This was full-scale rebellion, and Crowley now appeared in London, in April 1900, breathing fire and slaughter as an Envoy Extraordinary, given full powers by Mathers to deal with the situation. Rigged out in full Highland costume and a sinister black mask, with a huge gilt cross on his chest and a dagger at his side, he tried to seize possession of the London temple, which was in a modest house in a blameless suburban street, at 36 Blythe Road in Hammersmith. Crowley intended to change the locks and purge the membership, and he seems to have expected to be made Chief Adept in England.

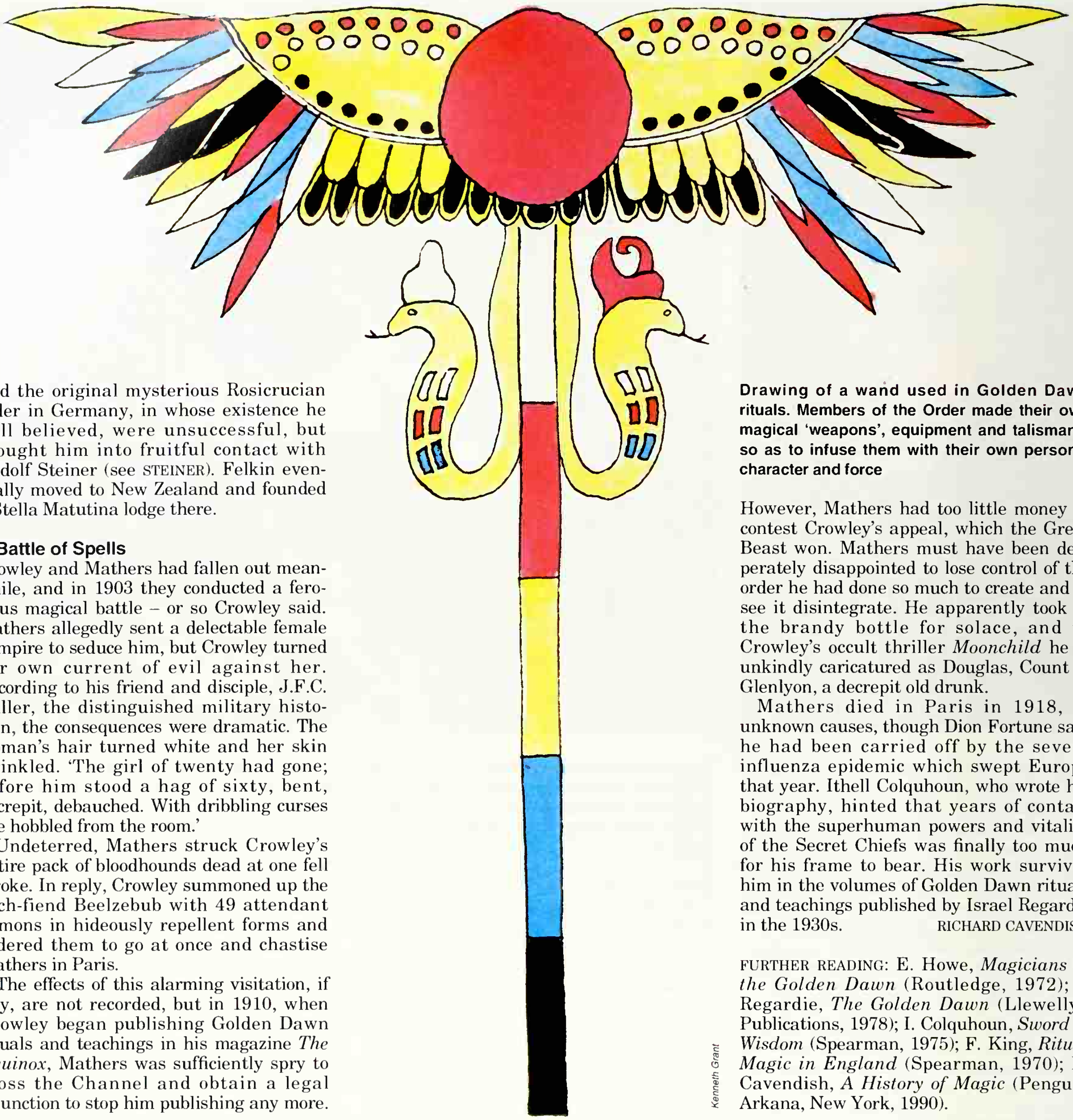
The attempt was blocked by W.B. Yeats and other stalwarts, who successfully appealed to the landlord of the house, and the London members, who had had enough, expelled both Mathers and Crowley from the Order. Yeats became Imperator in London and Annie Horniman returned to the fold, but the Golden Dawn was now breaking apart.

Splinter Groups

A small faction of members remained loyal to Mathers and formed the Alpha et Omega Temple. Yeats withdrew from active involvement in the Golden Dawn in 1901 and two years later a group of members led by A.E. Waite (see WAITE) took command of the original Isis-Urania Temple. Waite moved away from ritual magic towards mysticism, rewrote the rituals in a Christian spirit and changed the name of the order, significantly, from Hermetic Order to Holy Order. The novelist Charles Williams and Evelyn Underhill, the authority on Christian mysticism, were members of the Holy Order of the Golden Dawn, but it attracted little support and Waite wound it up in 1914.

The Golden Dawn had crossed the Atlantic when Mathers authorized the founding of the Thoth-Hermes temple in Chicago in the 1890s. A leading member was Paul Foster Case (1884-1954), who later founded an organization in Los Angeles called the Builders of the Adytum. Case believed he was in touch with the Secret Chiefs and regarded himself as the Golden Dawn's leader in America. He was deeply interested in the Tarot pack and wrote one of the most penetrating books on the symbolism of the cards, *The Tarot: a Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*, which came out in 1947.

Another group in Britain broke away to form the Order of the Stella Matutina (the Morning Star). Yeats was a member of this, as were Dion Fortune (see FORTUNE), Israel Regardie and E.Nesbit, the well-known writer of children's stories. The Stella Matutina was led by R.W.Felkin (c 1858-1922), a doctor who had joined the Golden Dawn's Edinburgh temple with his first wife before they moved to London in the 1890s. His second wife was a medium and he received communications from the Secret Chiefs through her, by way of automatic writing. His determined efforts to



find the original mysterious Rosicrucian order in Germany, in whose existence he still believed, were unsuccessful, but brought him into fruitful contact with Rudolf Steiner (see STEINER). Felkin eventually moved to New Zealand and founded a Stella Matutina lodge there.

A Battle of Spells

Crowley and Mathers had fallen out meanwhile, and in 1903 they conducted a ferocious magical battle – or so Crowley said. Mathers allegedly sent a delectable female vampire to seduce him, but Crowley turned her own current of evil against her. According to his friend and disciple, J.F.C. Fuller, the distinguished military historian, the consequences were dramatic. The woman's hair turned white and her skin wrinkled. 'The girl of twenty had gone; before him stood a hag of sixty, bent, decrepit, debauched. With dribbling curses she hobbled from the room.'

Undeterred, Mathers struck Crowley's entire pack of bloodhounds dead at one fell stroke. In reply, Crowley summoned up the arch-fiend Beelzebub with 49 attendant demons in hideously repellent forms and ordered them to go at once and chastise Mathers in Paris.

The effects of this alarming visitation, if any, are not recorded, but in 1910, when Crowley began publishing Golden Dawn rituals and teachings in his magazine *The Equinox*, Mathers was sufficiently spry to cross the Channel and obtain a legal injunction to stop him publishing any more.

Drawing of a wand used in Golden Dawn rituals. Members of the Order made their own magical 'weapons', equipment and talismans, so as to infuse them with their own personal character and force

Kenneth Grant

However, Mathers had too little money to contest Crowley's appeal, which the Great Beast won. Mathers must have been desperately disappointed to lose control of the order he had done so much to create and to see it disintegrate. He apparently took to the brandy bottle for solace, and in Crowley's occult thriller *Moonchild* he is unkindly caricatured as Douglas, Count of Glenlyon, a decrepit old drunk.

Mathers died in Paris in 1918, of unknown causes, though Dion Fortune said he had been carried off by the severe influenza epidemic which swept Europe that year. Ithell Colquhoun, who wrote his biography, hinted that years of contact with the superhuman powers and vitality of the Secret Chiefs was finally too much for his frame to bear. His work survives him in the volumes of Golden Dawn rituals and teachings published by Israel Regardie in the 1930s.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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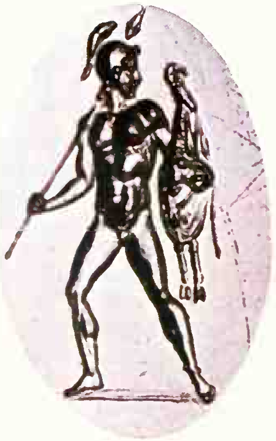
Golden Fleece

In Greek mythology, the object of the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts who, helped by the enchantress Medea, stole it from Colchis on the Black Sea, where it hung on a tree guarded by a dragon; it was the fleece of a ram which could think, speak and fly, sent by Hermes to save two children whose lives were threatened by their cruel stepmother.



Gong

Principal musical instrument of Asia, with religious and magical uses similar to those of bells in the West; sounded to accompany religious ceremonies, to drive away evil spirits or to expel the demons of disease; drinking from one after taking an oath gives the oath a binding significance; gongs are male or female according to tone, and are sometimes given individual names.

Head of the golem, from a famous film, *The Golem*. The story of the artificially created human being which turns on its master became associated with Rabbi Judah Loew, of Prague in the 16th century, but without historical foundation

National Film Archive

Jewish legend has its own Frankenstein's monster, a human being created by magical means who threatened to destroy his master

GOLEM

A GOLEM is a creature, especially a human being, created artificially by magic. In the late Jewish form of the legend, as told by Jakob Grimm in his *Journal for Hermits* (1808), the golem is the figure of a man, made of clay or mud, and brought to life when the miraculous name of God is pronounced over it. The golem is dumb (though other versions of the legend do credit it with the power of speech) but it can understand orders and is used as a servant to do the housework. It must never be allowed to leave the house. On its forehead is written the word *emeth* (truth). With every day that goes by, the golem gains weight and it gradually becomes bigger and stronger than anyone in the house, until they become afraid of it. They then rub out the first letter of the word on its forehead, altering it to *meth* (he is dead). The golem immediately collapses and turns back into clay again.

One man's golem, according to Grimm, grew so tall that its forehead was too high to reach. Its owner ordered the golem to take off its boots, so that when it bent down he would be able to reach its forehead. The golem did as it was told, and the owner succeeded in erasing the first letter but the mass of dead clay fell on top of him and crushed him.

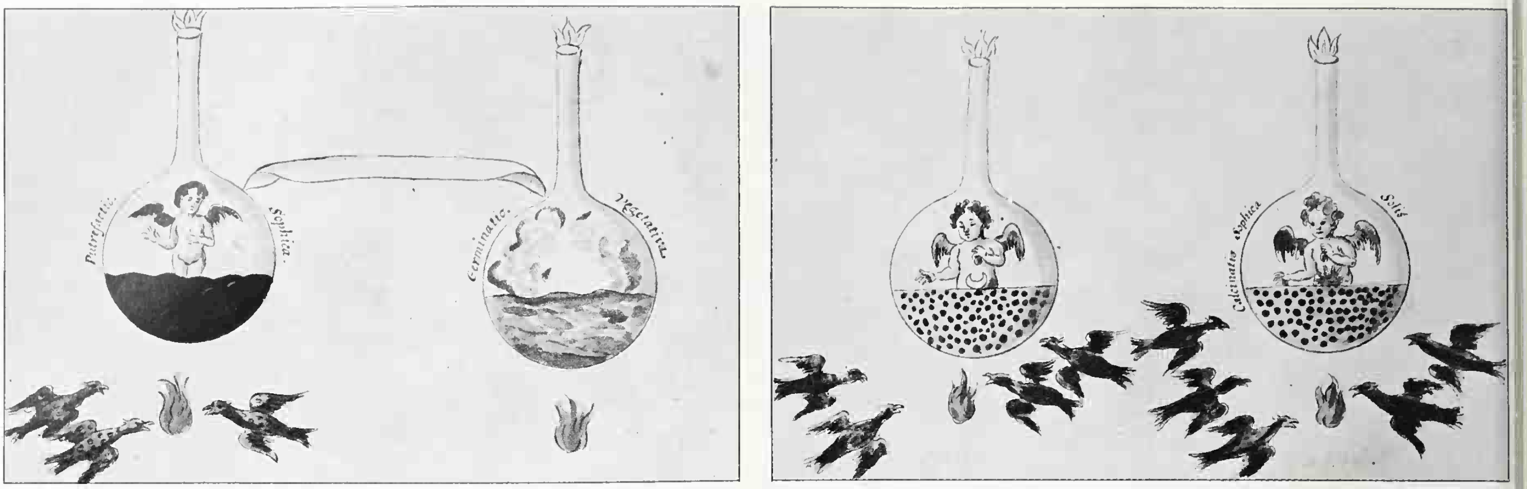
The Hebrew word *golem* occurs once in the Old Testament (Psalm 139. 16), where it means a human being which is not yet fully formed, an embryo. In the Talmud (the oldest extant code of Jewish law) the word is used once for Adam's body during the first hours of its existence but before it was fully endowed with life and consciousness. Elsewhere in the Talmud the word is used to denote an uncultured, boorish man. In medieval Hebrew the word was used as a technical philosophical term equivalent to the Greek *hyle*, that is, hylic matter, matter without form. Only at a much later stage was the word golem associated with magical traditions about the possibility of creating human and other beings by means of formulae, divine names, and permutations and combinations of Hebrew letters.

Act of Creation

The idea that it is possible to create living beings or to endow lifeless images or statues with life by magical means is widespread. In classical antiquity it was frequently associated with the alleged imparting of the power of speech to idols and statues. The Talmud too contains evidence that legends about such magical feats were current among Jews. One rabbi is said to have 'created a man' and sent him to a colleague. When the latter spoke to the messenger but received no reply, he recognized his true character and commanded him, 'Return to your dust'. Two other rabbis are reported to 'have made a calf for themselves' on the eve of every Sabbath and to have eaten it. They produced this calf by busying themselves with the book *Yetsirah*.

The reference to the *Sefer Yetsirah* (the Book of Creation) indicates the range of ideas and concepts underlying the theory of the magical creation of living beings. There is no way of knowing whether the *Sefer Yetsirah* (or *Hilkhoth Yetsirah*) of the Talmudic legend is or is not identical with, or similar to, the extant book bearing that name (see ALPHABET; CABALA). According to this book which came to be highly regarded in later Jewish mysticism, the world is derived from 32 elements which are the first ten numbers and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. All reality is a reality of the letters, the elements of which the cosmos is formed.

These ideas, which go back in part to Talmudic notions concerning the creative power of the letters of the name of God or of the Hebrew letters in general (because all combinations of these were held to be mystical names of God), obviously lent themselves to magical interpretation and application. Whereas the idea of creating living beings by magical means was associated in Greek and Arab magic with astrology, the emphasis in the Jewish tradition is on letter mysticism. These concepts were developed in the commentaries on the *Sefer Yetsirah* that



The idea of the golem was linked with the belief that artificial human beings could be created by alchemy, a belief stimulated by symbolic pictures like these, showing the creation of a spirit in the vessel. 'Let two or at the most three parts of our mercury liquefy, one part of silver or gold of the vulgar, subtiliated, and they will become one body, spongious and inseparable, which is called our silver or gold, and not of the vulgar . . .' from *Cabala Mineralis*, an alchemical manuscript in the British Museum

were composed from the 12th century onwards. In these commentaries the word golem also begins to appear as a technical term for a being artificially created by applying the mysteries of the *Sefer Yetsirah*.

In the circle of Jewish mystics of the 12th–13th centuries known as the 'Hasidim of Germany' these conceptions gave rise to a mystical rite of creating a golem. There is little doubt that this ritual, in spite of its magical character, did not serve any materialist purpose (such as creating a robot servant) but was essentially a spiritual experience fraught with symbolic meaning. At the conclusion of their studies of the *Sefer Yetsirah* and similar texts, these mystics would perform a ritual 'act of creation' symbolizing their level of spiritual achievement. In this ritual the participants would take earth from virgin soil and shape it into a golem, or, according to another version, bury a golem made from clay in the earth, and bring it to life by walking round it and using the appropriate combination of letters and mystical 'names of God'. By the act of walking in the opposite direction and reciting the magic formulae in reverse order, the golem would again become lifeless.

Rebellious Servant

What was essentially a mystic-symbolic ritual in the circles of the German Hasidim soon became a subject for popular folklore and legend. Concurrently the golem too became an actual creature serving his master and fulfilling menial and other tasks laid upon him. Legends of this kind were fairly widespread among German Jews after the 15th century and came also to be known among non-Jews; Goethe's *Sorcerer's Apprentice* is indebted to the golem legend.

Earlier legends implying the possibility of resurrecting the dead by putting a piece of parchment with the name of God into the mouth or on the arm, were transferred to the golem, which it was believed could be made lifeless again by removing or inverting the mystical formula. The idea of a golem also linked up with the alchemists' notion of an artificial man produced by alchemical means (the homunculus of Paracelsus). As in the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the idea that the golem could get out of hand and his creator might no longer control or master him became a major feature of popular legend. The golem would grow to giant size, and become a serious threat to others, even to his master or members of his household. To reduce this Frankenstein's monster to dust again it would be necessary to remove the parchment with the mystic formula from his forehead. The golem's giant size made such an attempt very hazardous.

The Golem of Prague

It must have been . . . toward the middle of the 18th century that the Polish legend about the rabbi of Chelm moved to Prague and attached itself to a far more famous figure, the 'Great Rabbi' Loew of Prague (c 1520–1609). Of course the Prague legend may have grown up independently, but this strikes me as very unlikely. In the Prague tradition of the early 19th century, the legend was associated with certain special features of the Sabbath Eve liturgy. The story is that Rabbi Loew fashioned a golem who did all manner of work for his master during the week. But because all creatures rest on the Sabbath, Rabbi Loew turned his golem back into clay every Friday evening, by taking away the name of God. Once, however, the rabbi forgot to remove the *shem* (from the *Shem Hameforash*, the ineffable name of God). The congregation was assembled for services in the synagogue and had already recited the 92nd Psalm, when the mighty golem ran amuck, shaking houses, and threatening to destroy everything. Rabbi Loew was summoned; it was still dusk, and the Sabbath had not already begun. He rushed at the raging golem and tore away the *shem*, whereupon the golem crumbled into dust. The rabbi then ordered that the Sabbath Psalm should be sung a second time, a custom which has been maintained ever since in that synagogue, the Altner Schul, but buried his remains in the attic of the ancient synagogue, where they lie to this day. Once, after much fasting, Rabbi Ezekiel Lander, one of Rabbi Loew's most prominent successors, is said to have gone up to look at the golem. On his return he gave an order, binding on all future generations, that no mortal must ever go up to that attic . . .

Gershom G. Scholem
On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism

The best known form of the golem legend is associated with Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (16th century) but without any historical foundation whatever. As a result of this association, which seems to date from the end of the 18th century, most current forms and versions of the golem legend, popular as well as literary are connected with the history of the ghetto and the old synagogues of Prague. The first legendary biography describing a rabbi as the creator and master of a golem servant appeared in connection with Rabbi Elijah of Chelm (died 1583), and its substance was later transferred to Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague. In the later versions the golem is credited not only with enormous strength but also with uncanny instincts which enabled him to serve the Rabbi and the Jews of Prague by discovering plots against the Jews – especially accusations of ritual murder – and preventing their execution. Many stories relating to Rabbi Judah Loew and the golem are meant to 'explain' special liturgical practices of the congregation of Prague.

In the 19th century the golem legend became a favourite literary subject both with Jews and non-Jews. First in German literature, and later in Hebrew and Yiddish, the legends were expanded and interpreted in diverse ways. The verses emphasizing the golem's function in preventing libellous accusations and their consequent dangers to the Jewish community were probably composed after the resurgence of accusations of ritual murder in the 1890s. Among the best known works inspired by the legend are the mystic-occultist novel *Der Golem* (1915) by Gustav Meyrink, published in an English translation as *The Golem* (1964) and the Yiddish drama *Der Golem* by H. Leivick.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

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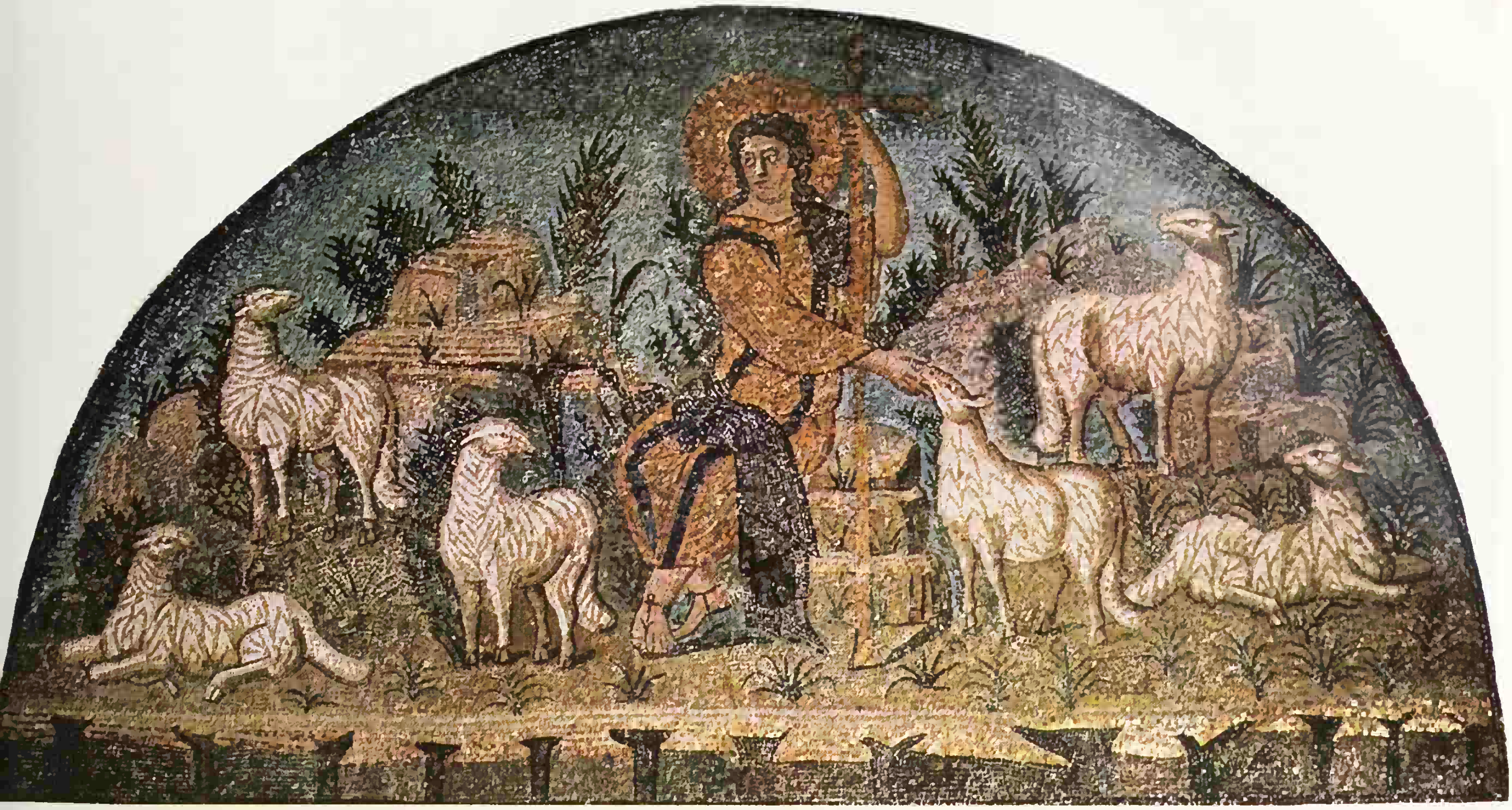


Hirmer

GOOD SHEPHERD

THE FIGURE of a shepherd bearing a sheep upon his shoulders frequently appears in early Christian art, either as a statue or carved on the sides of sarcophagi, or painted on the walls and ceilings of catacombs. The igure depicted is sometimes bearded and wearing a short tunic. In these various forms, t was used as a decorative symbol by Christians from c 200 to 400 AD. It has been customary to identify such figures as representations of Christ as the Good Shepherd, and in support of the identification good evidence could be cited. In the gospel of St John (chapter 10) Jesus is recorded as saying: 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep'; and the gospel of Luke (chapter 15) contains the parable of the Lost Sheep, which the shepherd seeks and, finding, lays upon his shoulders with rejoicing. The image appeared to be an easily intelligible one, and ts popularity is further attested by its use on cups or bowls, on terracotta lamps, and even on knife handles.

More recent research, however, has questioned both the identification of this 'shepherd figure' with Jesus, and also whether it was originally a Christian symbol. It has now been shown that the figure of a man bearing a sheep or goat has a very long ancestry in the art of the ancient Near East. It appears in Mesopotamian art as early as the 3rd millenium BC, in the form of a man carrying a kid in his arms, for sacrifice to a deity. Hittite art of the late 2nd millenium BC provides an even closer prototype of the Christian 'Good Shepherd' in depictions of a man bearing a goat upon his shoulder as an offering to the gods: in either hand he holds a pair of the victim's legs. These figures doubtless constituted a familiar symbol of the pious service of the devotees of the gods concerned. Greek art introduces another phase of the tradition with the statue of Hermes *kriophoros*, 'ram-bearing', made about 450 BC for the ancient city of Tanagra in Boeotia. This represented the god Hermes as the divine patron of shepherds, bearing across his shoulders a ram. The god is shown in heroic nudity and initiates a form of presentation found later, that of nude shepherds carrying sheep which appear on sculptured sarcophagi of the Roman Imperial period (c 300–400 AD). The dying god Adonis is depicted in a similar state, bearing a ram and accompanied by the female figure of a Nature goddess, on the ceiling of a 2nd century Roman tomb.

However, a tradition gradually developed of portraying these sheep or goat-bearing figures simply dressed in shepherd's costume without specifying identity with a particular deity. This transformation coincided with the craving for an idealized pastoral life that characterized sophisticated Graeco-Roman society, and is reflected in the poetry of Theocritus and Virgil, and other contemporary poets and philosophers. The image of the shepherd, and his tender care for his sheep, came thus to symbolize the newly appreciated virtue of *philanthropia* or *humanitas* and was used, significantly, on the sculptured sarcophagi that became fashionable, for the burial of the wealthy, together with other imagery of pagan origin, expressive of virtues and hopes related to the afterlife.

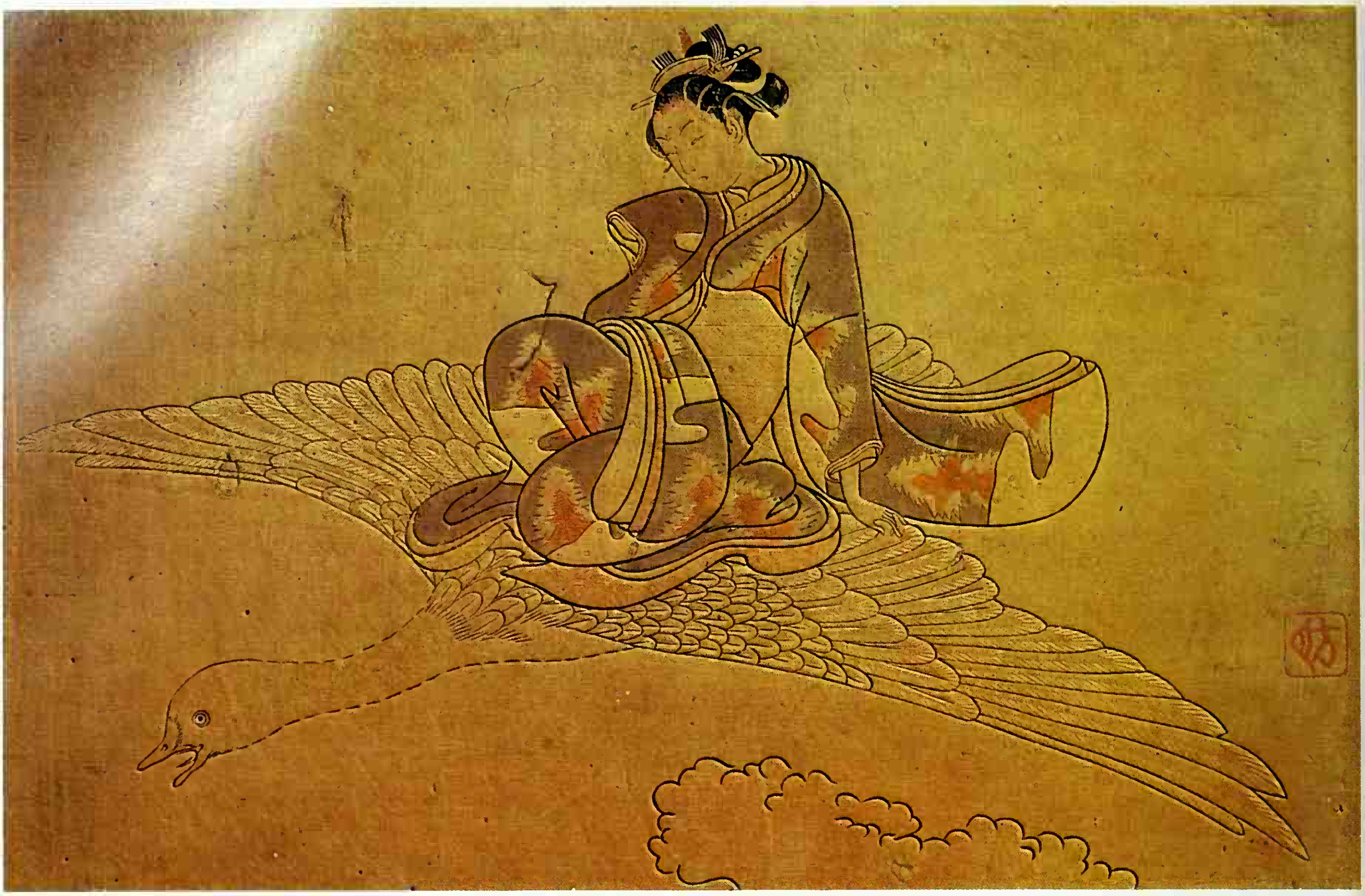
It would, accordingly, appear that the 'shepherd figure' was adopted into Christian art from contemporary pagan art, and careful examination of its use on Christian sarcophagi of the period indicates that, with two possible exceptions, it denoted the virtue of *philanthropia* or, in Christian terminology, love of one's neighbour.

Analysis of the use of the 'shepherd figure' in catacomb art, however, suggests that an identification was made here with Christ in a very significant context. It was the practice to cover the *arcosolium*, the cavity in the catacomb wall in which the corpse was placed, with a marble slab which was decorated with various religious symbols and an inscription. The 'shepherd figure' was often depicted here as a representation of Christ in the role of the *psychopompos*, or guide of the departed soul on its perilous way to the next world. Hermes had this office in pagan religion; but it is more likely that Christ's role in this connection was inspired by Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. However, Christ was regarded as the *psychopompos* for a short while only, and the office was soon attributed to the Archangel Michael (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

The 'Good Shepherd' figure disappears from Christian iconography after the year 400. But the idea of Christ as the Good Shepherd, enthroned among his sheep, is magnificently portrayed in a 5th century mosaic in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna.

FURTHER READING: A. Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1967) and *Byzantine Painting* (Rizzoli Intl., 1979); F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (Nelson, 1958).

Christ as the Good Shepherd, a 5th century mosaic from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna: the figure of the shepherd was also well-known in pagan religious art



The flight of the wild geese has always moved and impressed mankind, and deities are often shown riding on them. *Above* 18th century Japanese calendar print, in which the girl is representing the goddess Kosenko *Right* Drawing from southern India of the god Brahma, riding on a cosmic gander

The impressive spectacle of huge flocks of geese flying overhead with the return of spring, anciently gave rise to goose myths and ceremonies, usually associated with fertility; strangest of all bird beliefs, is that of the barnacle goose: 'they are not flesh, nor born of flesh'

GOOSE

IN MANY PARTS of Europe and Asia the goose has played an important role in local folklore, custom and mythology, and in the British Isles it is one of the few birds still involved in ritual observances. The preservation of such folk rites in a sophisticated society usually indicates the very great antiquity of the beliefs originally associated with them.

The principal goose ritual in England is a goose dinner which is eaten at Michaelmas (29 September), a custom which persists in the Yorkshire Dales and used to be much more widespread; a similar feast is held in Denmark on or near Martinmas (11 November). It might at first seem absurd to regard having goose for dinner as anything more than enjoying a good meal but customs which are observed at specific seasons of the year often have an interesting history and there is plenty of documentary evidence to attest to the great age of the Michaelmas goose feast.

A record dating from the time of Edward IV states that: 'John de la Hay was bound to render to William Barneby, Lord of Lastres, in the county of Hereford, for a parcel of the demesne lands, one goose fit for the Lord's dinner on the fast of St Michael the Archangel.' George Gascoigne wrote in 1575:

> And when the tenants come to pay their quarter's rent
> They bring some fowl at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent
> At Christmas a capon, at Michaelmas a goose;
> And somewhat else at New Year's tide for fear their lease flies loose.

By the 16th century, therefore, the Michaelmas goose was believed to be a propitiatory gift to keep landlords in good humour. It was also believed that eating goose at Michaelmas brought good luck: 'If you eat goose on Michaelmas Day you will never want for money all the year round.' A cookery book of 1709 informs the housewife:

> So stubble geese at Michaelmas are seen
> upon the spit; next May produces green.

'Green geese', mentioned by Shakespeare in 'Love's Labour's Lost' were birds fed on green pastures and the rhyme obviously implies fertility, increase and good fortune.

Bird of the Sun

Beliefs and ceremonies associated with the goose used to be characteristic of most northern countries. In pagan Sweden the goose figured as a grave offering; in Germany geese were sacrificed to Odin at the autumnal equinox and there was apparently a goose goddess at Cologne. During the 13th century the inhabitants of Friesland were accused of a form of witchcraft in which a goose was involved.

Goose beliefs and cults were not confined to Europe. Among Siberian tribes the bird figured in various ceremonies. One tribe sacrificed it to the river or sky god while another made a 'nest' for the goose god of skin, fur and cloth. Further south, in India, the wild goose is considered of great significance and the god Brahma is frequently depicted riding on a gander. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was also shown being borne through the air by a goose. In China a goose was carried at the head of processions and a pair of geese or duck might be presented to a newly married couple; the mandarin duck is a symbol of marital fidelity.

All these beliefs and rituals appear to have originated in an association between the goose and the sun, and consequently with fertility. In early times people were greatly impressed by the spectacle of huge flocks passing overhead in spring and they connected the birds with the lengthening of the days, greater warmth, growth or vegetation and the mating of birds and beasts. Wild geese thus came to represent the power which wrought these changes – the sun or sun god.

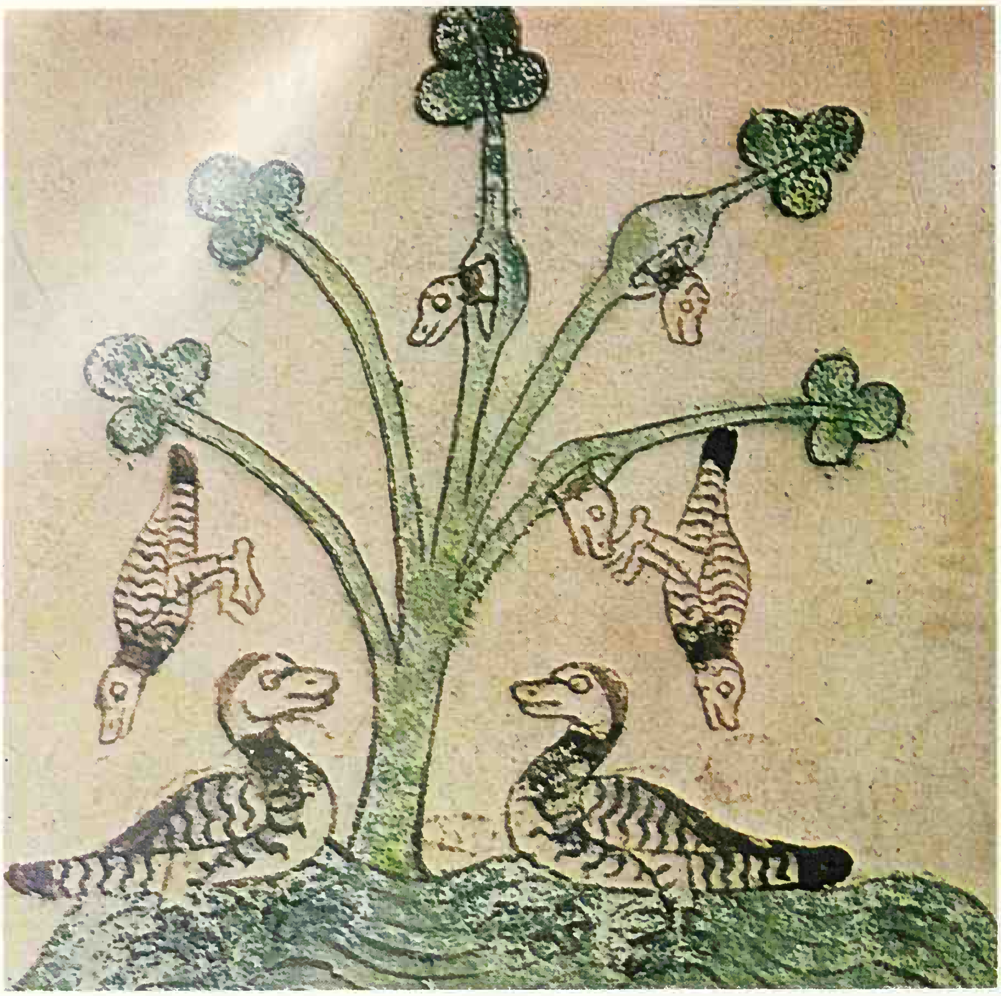
Goose feasts may be a dying tradition in the British Isles but another ritual, derived from goose beliefs, is still widely observed though without realization of its origin – the custom of 'breaking the wishbone' when a chicken is served for dinner. A Bavarian physician, writing in 1455, describes the procedure by which the weather might be forecast by examining the breastbone of the Martinmas goose. He adds that the Teutonic knights in Prussia 'waged all their wars by the goose-bone'; that is, they judged by this kind of oracle whether the weather would be propitious for their campaigns. In Yorkshire it was believed that the breastbone of a goose appeared dark in colour before a severe winter and much lighter if the winter were to be mild. It is a natural corollary to belief in the supernatural powers of the goose to attribute oracular significance to its remains.

The Barnacle Goose

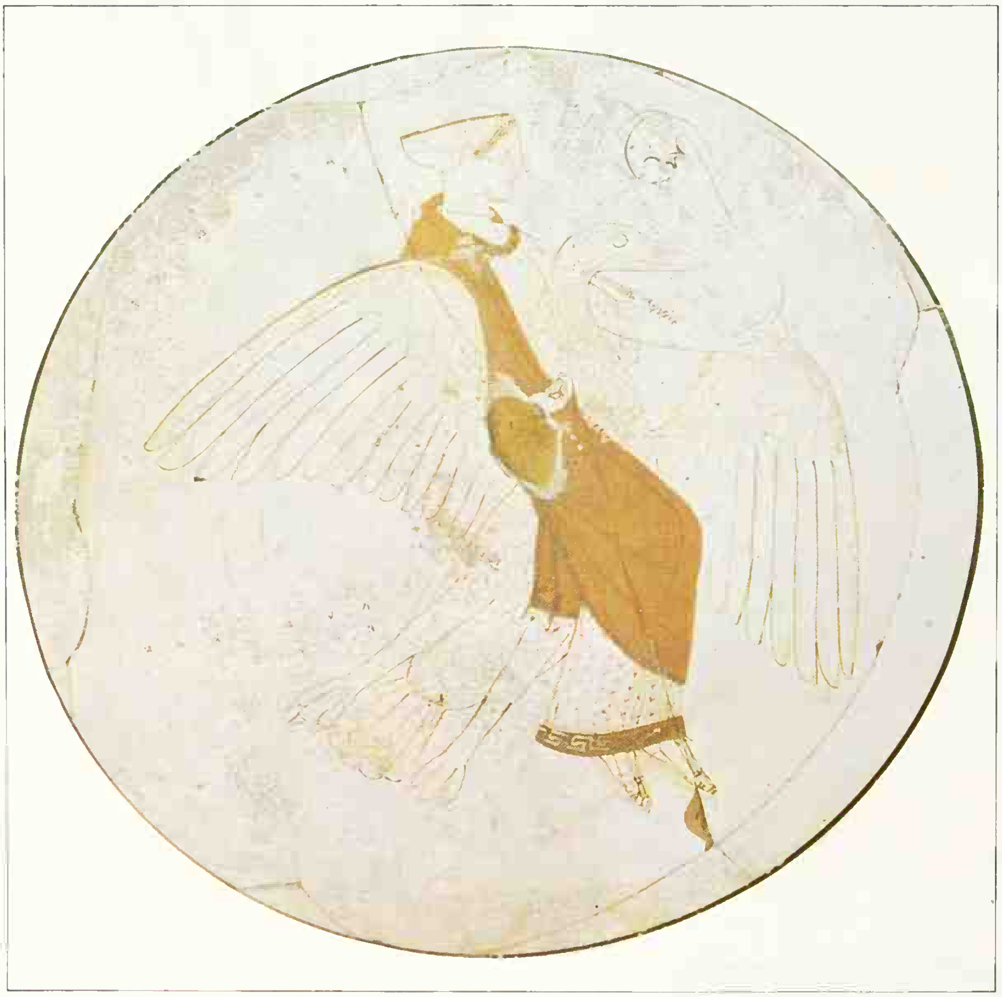
The remarkable Irish belief that geese hatch from shellfish relates in particular to the barnacle goose which still winters around the coast of Britain in great numbers. It is now known that barnacle geese only breed north of the Arctic Circle, and in the past the breeding of this noisy, conspicuous species of goose was a mystery, because no nest had ever been found or reported even by those who sailed up to Iceland. After a severe storm, the bodies of birds might be found drifting among flotsam on the beach, covered with barnacles, and so it could be believed that it was the shells themselves which generated the geese.

A 10th century Arab diplomat writing of a country called 'Shasin', probably Ireland, reported: 'There is something marvellous there, such as is nowhere else in the world. On the sea-shore grow trees, and from time to time the bank gives way and a tree falls into the sea. The waves toss it up and down so much that a white jelly is formed on it. This goes on until the jelly increases in size and assumes the shape of an egg. Then the egg is moulded in the form of a bird with nothing but both feet and the bill attached to the wood. When Allah wills, the wind that blows on it produces feathers and it detaches

Chris Barker



British Museum



Michael Holford

the feet and bill from the wood. So it becomes a bird which scuttles into the sea about the surface of the water. It is never found alive, but when the sea rises it is thrown by the water on the shore, where it is found dead. It is a black bird similar to the bird that is called the Diver.'

In 1186 the Welsh writer Giraldus Cambrensis, returning from his travels in Ireland, lectured on his experiences to members of Oxford University: 'There are in this place many birds which are called Bernacae,' he said. 'Nature produces them against Nature in the most extraordinary way. They are like marsh geese but somewhat smaller. They are produced from fir timber tossed along the sea and are at first like gum. Afterwards they hang down by their beaks as if they were seaweed attached to timber, and are surrounded by shells in order to grow more freely . . . They do not breed and lay eggs like other birds, nor do they hatch any eggs, nor do they seem to build nests in any corner of the earth. Hence Bishops and religious men do not scruple to dine off these birds at the time of fasting, because they are not flesh nor born of flesh.'

The tradition was given wide currency by John Gerard in his *Herball* of 1597. He was unscrupulous in his borrowing and often careless in regard to facts. As he and others copied and improved on the illustrations of barnacle geese hatching, these became increasingly realistic, showing birds issuing from barnacle-like fruit growing on a tree by the waterside.

A contributory factor to the survival of this type of myth, lay in the supporting evidence of travellers' tales of fabulous creatures, which gained wide currency and were popularly believed. A Friar Odoric, who made a journey to the Far East in 1313, noted in his journal that he had heard of a tree reputed to bear melons containing 'a little beast like a young lamb' – probably a garbled description of a cotton plant. He added 'I myself have heard reported that there stand certain trees upon the shore of the Irish Sea, bearing fruit like a melon which, at certain times of the year do fall into the water and become birds.'

The barnacle goose legend, as Giraldus had realized, several hundreds of years earlier, provided an excellent excuse for eating goose on fast days. The Irish sense of humour has often come to their rescue, when living was hard and food scarce, so they clung to the belief in the generation of the barnacle goose from shellfish and thus were able to conform to the requirements of church discipline without offending their consciences.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: Edward A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Dover, 1970); W. Harter, *Birds: In Fact and Legend* (Sterling, 1979).

Above **Barnacle geese could be said to hatch from shellfish or trees, because no one had ever seen their nests (they breed north of the Arctic Circle)** ***Below*** **Aphrodite riding a goose: Greek, 5th century BC**

Anyone rash enough to gaze on the Gorgons was petrified, literally and metaphorically, for their gaze was so terrible that it turned the onlooker to stone

GORGONS

THE GREEKS APPLIED the name Gorgo or, less commonly, Gorgon to female monsters which are a favourite subject in their extant art, sometimes terrifying but sometimes, to all appearances, humorous. In mythology, the Gorgons figure chiefly in the story of Perseus. The ancient lore concerning them is most fully summed up in Apollodorus's *Library of Mythology*, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in Lucan's *Pharsalia*. These accounts written between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD, are all late versions of the myth of Perseus, and depend on much older poetry, which has been lost. It is not known that there was ever a complete epic that described the adventures of Perseus in his quest for Medusa.

The scattered references to the Gorgon or Gorgons in earlier poetry and poetical fragments known to us are usually to the terrifying aspect of the Gorgon's head, as for instance in the *Odyssey* (book II) where Odysseus fears that Persephone may send up the Gorgon's head to confront him if he stays longer by the entrance of Hades. In Hesiod's poem *Shield of Hercules* the Gorgons are said to be represented on the shield pursuing Perseus as he flies away carrying the head of Medusa, which is so large that it covers all his back. After him rush Medusa's sisters, the other Gorgons, 'not to be approached and not to be described, eager to seize him. The shield rang sharp and shrill with a loud din as they trod on the pale adamant, on their belts were two serpents writhing and arching their necks and darting out their tongues and furiously gnashing their teeth as they savagely glared. And over the terrible heads of the Gorgons a great Dread quivered.'

The Three Sisters

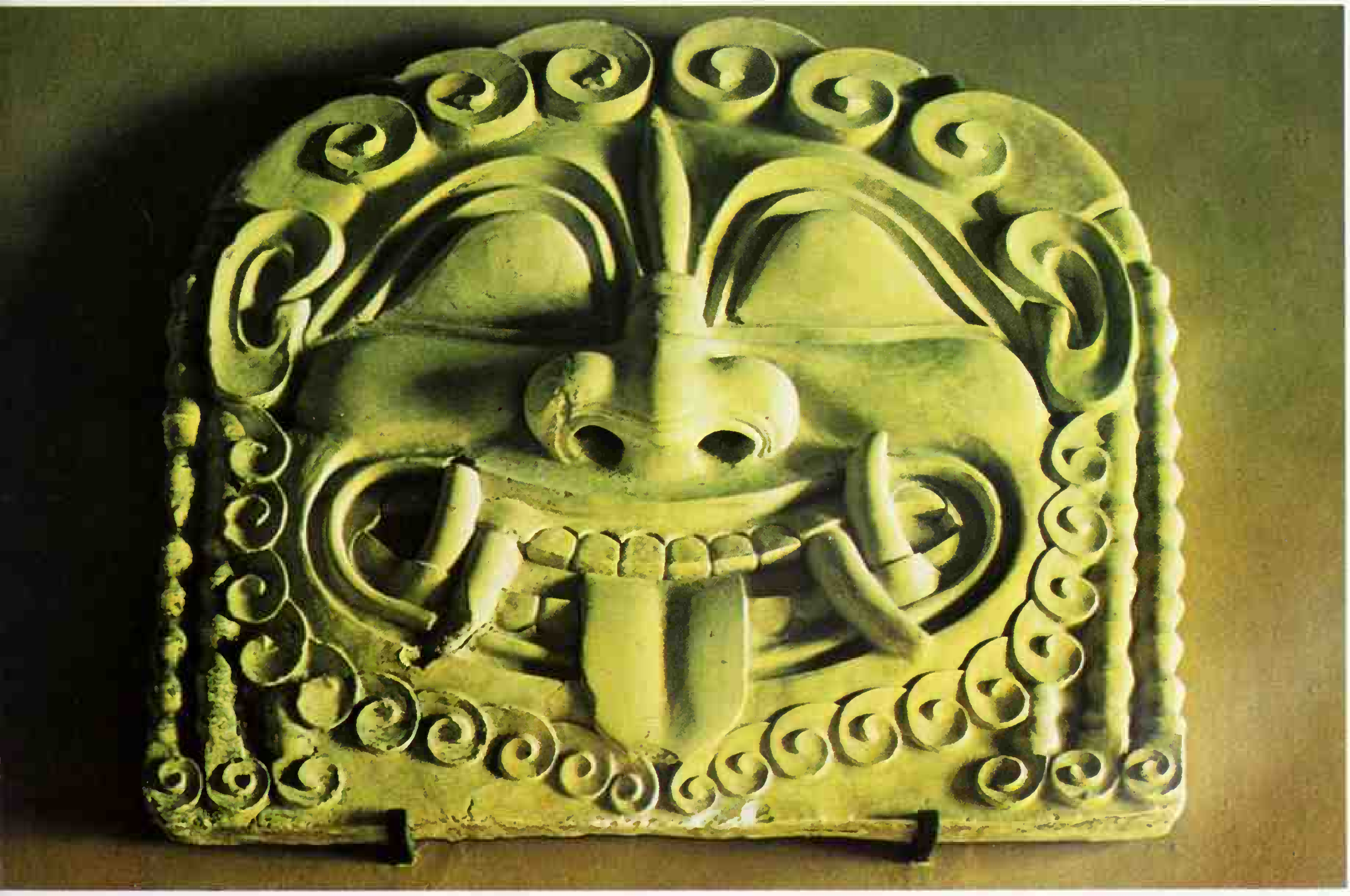
This is the earliest continuous piece of poetry dealing with the Gorgons (except for the summary account of their origin and dwelling in Hesiod's *Theogony*). In the common versions of the myth of Perseus, at least in those which became accepted by such writers as Apollodorus, there were three Gorgon sisters, daughters of the ancient sea gods, Phorcys and Ceto, namely Stheno and Euryale, who were immortal, and Medusa who was mortal. According to most writers, they lived on the Atlantic shores of Africa, which seems to link them with the underworld, which was likewise placed in the far west. According to the philologists, the name Gorgons should once have denoted a terrible roaring or bellowing. But in Greek usage the name always suggests their glaring eyes.

Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae, grew up on the island of Seriphos, whose king Polydectes conceived a passion for Danae, while Perseus protected her. To get Perseus out of the way, Polydectes sent him to fetch the Gorgon's head, an enterprise which would, he hoped, lead him to his death. But Perseus was helped by Hermes and Athena. The nymphs gave Perseus the winged sandals of Hermes, the *kibisis*, apparently a large sack or wallet, and the cap of Hades which made its wearer invisible. Hermes also gave him the sickle (*harpe*), a special curved sword with which he was able to cut off the head of Medusa.

Once Famous for her Beauty

Perseus flew to the home of the monsters where he found the three Gorgons asleep, their heads covered with snakes instead of hair, and their mouths armed with great tusks like those of boars. Their gaze turned to stone all who beheld them. As they slept, Perseus stood over them, Athena guiding his hand, and looked away at a polished shield while he cut off the head of Medusa. From her as she died sprang forth the winged horse Pegasus. Perseus put the head into the sack and set off homeward, pursued by the other two Gorgons, who could not see him but tracked him by smell. They failed to catch him. On his way back he made use of the Gorgon's head against his enemies, and when he arrived at Seriphos he turned Polydectes and his followers to

'And over the terrible heads of the Gorgons, a great Dread quivered': it seems likely that such fearsome creatures had a special connection with the underworld: Greek head of a Gorgon, from Syracuse in Sicily



C. M. Dixon

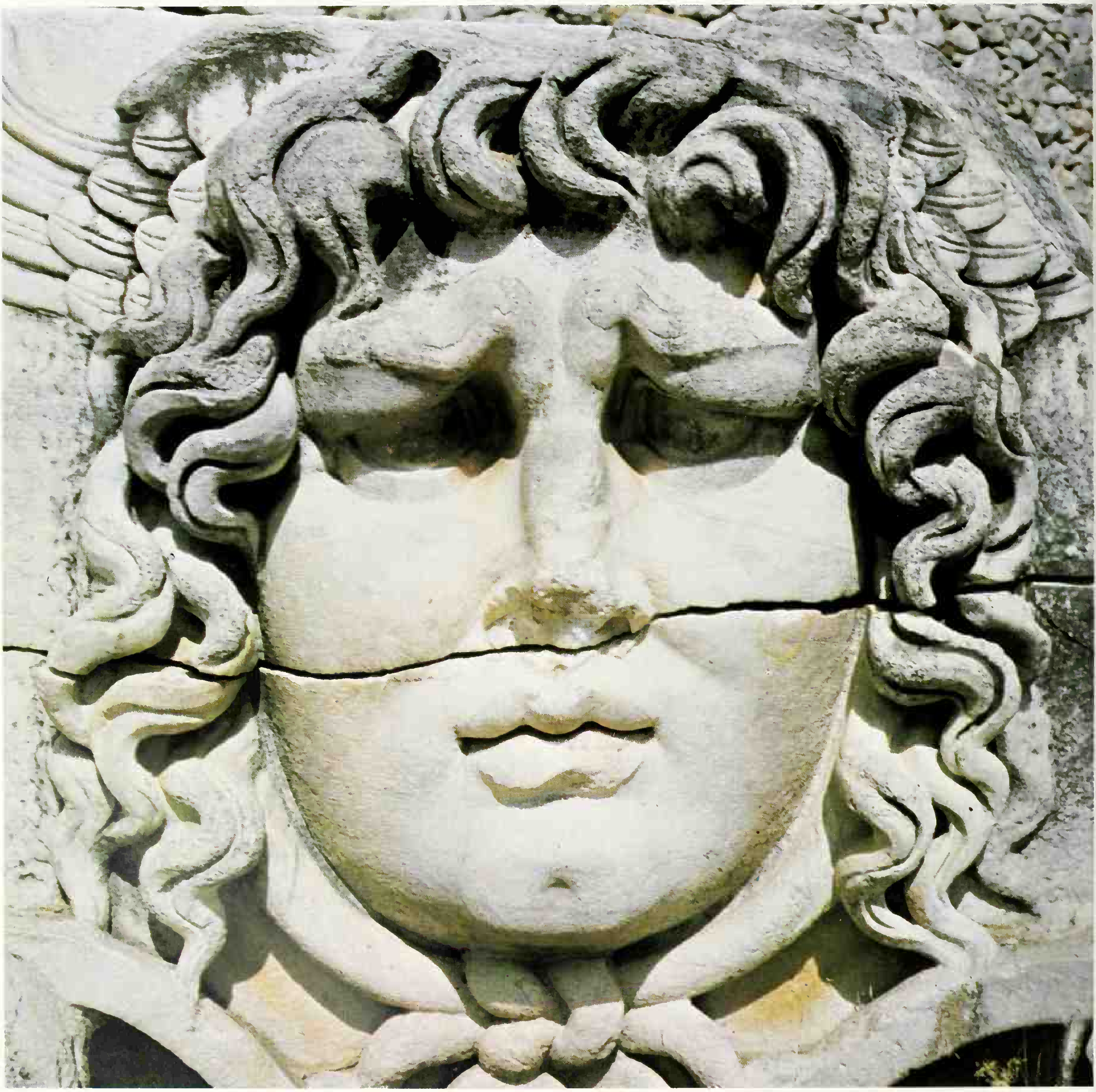
stone. He returned the sandals and other gifts to the nymphs and finally gave the head of Medusa to Athena to adorn her goatskin shield.

Though in Ovid and other writers Medusa is said to have been once famous for her beauty, she was grotesquely ugly when she had taken on the nature of a Gorgon. In art, particularly on vases and architectural ornaments, the Gorgons are shown in human form but with wings and very wide faces to contain their immense tusked mouths and thick lolling tongues. Their great eyes glare in an inhuman manner, sometimes like those of wild beasts and sometimes those of cuttlefish. Their pursuit of Perseus, as described in Hesiod, is often shown with the details that he gives. The *gorgoneion*, or gorgon-face, was one of many demon-faces that existed in archaic Greek art. One of its purposes as a magical object was to frighten away evil beings. It seems likely that the Gorgons have a special connection with the underworld because they are so lethal. If so, the expedition of Perseus might fall within the class called 'the harrowing of hell' (see HELL) to which the similar expedition of Hercules to Hades to fetch up Cerberus certainly belongs.

If the origins of the Gorgons are sought outside Greece, the most likely source is the Near East, Anatolia, Phoenicia or Mesopotamia, where religious art abounds in monsters. It has been plausibly suggested that the origin of the Gorgon face is in the Anatolian and Syrian sculptures of open-mouthed lions with lolling tongues which were attendant on the gods. Perseus has a connection with Joppa in Phoenicia, where he delivers Andromeda from the sea monster. His sickle-shaped sword, like that used by Cronus to castrate Uranus, is of Near Eastern origin.

FURTHER READING: Apollodorus, *Library of Mythology* (Loeb edn.); K. Schefold *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1966).

The gaze of the Gorgons turned all who beheld them to stone. Gorgon faces were common in archaic Greek art and were intended to frighten away evil beings. Head from Didyma



Sonia Halliday

The Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral

Gospel

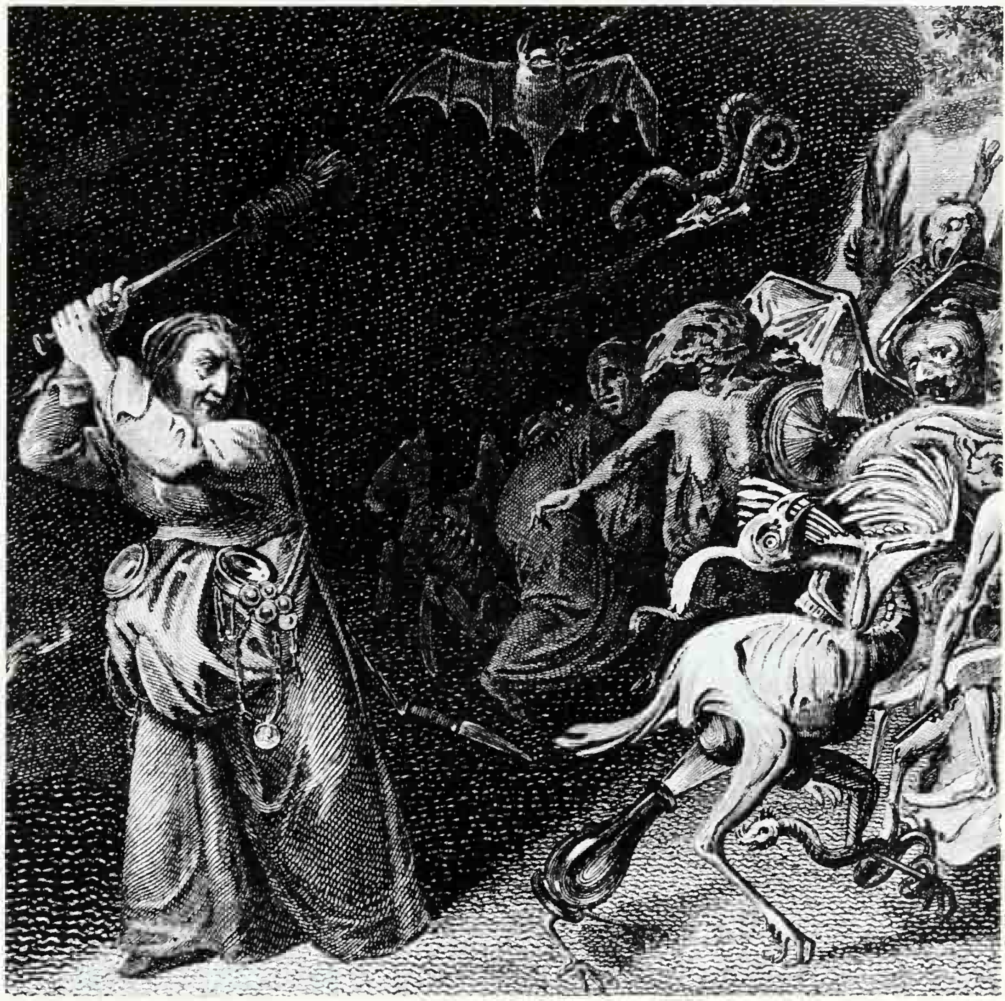
Literally 'good news', the doctrines preached by Christ and his apostles: the news of Christ's life and work in the accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the evangelists (from a Greek word meaning 'good news'); all four gospels were probably composed before 100 AD, with Mark's the oldest, but the dates are disputed; the first three, which share a common view of Christ and his teaching are called 'synoptic'; the traditional symbols of the evangelists are respectively the man, lion, ox, and eagle.

For reasons which we can only speculate about today, a respectable Scottish farmer's wife spontaneously denounced herself as a witch in 1662. Her confession included stories of intercourse with the Devil and rides to fairyland

ISABEL GOWDIE

THE NAME of Isabel Gowdie continually crops up in surveys of British witchcraft. The completeness of her case ensures that a reference to her is in place over a wide range of topics – magic murder, wind-raising, 'shape-shifting', flying, sterility rites, coven membership, spirits, excursions to fairyland – the Gowdie case has them all, and more. For some writers she seems to represent a sort of ideal witch, a prototype, the product of the final wave of witch persecution, when the popular and legal image of the witch had been clearly defined and everyone, including the witch herself, knew just what was expected of her.

This is not, however, to suggest that Isabel Gowdie herself was a victim of one of those classic trials in which the weapons of intimidation, circumstantial evidence and the primary assumption of guilt combined to carry an innocent woman to her death. On the contrary, Gowdie's confession is famous, though not unique, for being totally spontaneous. Before she made it to the surprised and discomforted elders of Auldearne kirk in Morayshire in 1662, no one, not even her husband apparently, had suspected her of illicit practices. She made no attempt to dissemble or excuse herself but, like Agnes Sampson, another famous Scottish witch, had apparently decided to 'tell all'.



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

'Each one of us has a Spirit to wait upon us, when we please to call upon him.' If they were real at all, these spirits may have been male members of the witch organization, dressed up. A witch with demonic spirits, by Ryckaert

Mischief for Idle Hands

Isabel Gowdie was an attractive, red-headed girl, married to a farmer living on the edge of Lochloy near Auldearne. She seems to have married young, and quickly grew bored on the lonely farm: she was childless and it was said that her husband was a boorish man, her social inferior, lacking her wits and education. Nowadays we might say that Gowdie was neurotic because of the unsatisfying conditions of her life; in her own era it was believed, more literally, that Satan found mischief for idle hands to do. By her own account the 'man in grey' who in 1647 accosted her one day on the downs found her ready and even eager to follow him. He baptized her that same evening in Auldearne kirk, giving her the name of 'Janet', a typical non-Christian nickname. She dedicated herself to him, and he put a witch's mark upon her, sucking her blood.

This ceremony and its site, suggesting as it does a parody of the Christian ceremony, provides classic evidence for supporters of Dr Margaret Murray's view that the witchcraft cult was quite real and coherent, and that the similarities between it and Christian ritual date back jointly to one common primeval source of cult and myth. On this hypothesis, it is entirely possible that what Gowdie said on this and other subjects was substantially true, that she was indeed approached by a man who may or may not have been already known to her, and who was presumably the Devil-god of a local coven. Her acquiescence to his invitation would suggest that, whether the kirk elders knew of it or not, there was already a thriving organization of several covens in the neighbourhood, to which a number of local women belonged or were soon to belong.

In evidence, Gowdie was eventually to give their names (13 to a coven) and also the names of the personal spirits or fairies who attended upon each:

> Ilk one of us has a Spirit to wait upon us, when we please to call upon him. I remember not all the Spirits' names; but there is one called Swein, which waits upon the said Margaret Wilson, in Auldearne; he is still (always) clothed in grass-green; and the said Margaret Wilson has a nickname called Pikle nearest the Wind. The next Spirit is called Rorie, who waits upon Bessie Wilson, in Auldearne; he is still clothed in yellow; and her nickname is Throw the Corn Yard . . . Jean Marten is Maid to the Coven that I am of; and her nickname is Over the Dyke with It, because the Devil always takes the Maiden in his hand next him, when we dance Gillatrypes; and when we would leap . . . he and she will say 'Over the Dyke with it!'

Her own Spirit, she added, was called the Read Riever and habitually wore black. She seems to have regarded these beings as supernaturals, but the 'spirits' were presumably, like the Devil himself, male members of the organization dressed up. The gay dances suggest the traditional rituals, such as 'follow-my-leader', and the circles 'widdershins', against the course of the sun. The meetings were apparently held regularly, with a grand meeting at the end of each quarter. They ended in the traditional phallic orgy, which has led some modern commentators to suppose that the whole business was the product of the disordered imaginations of frustrated women, but which equally supports the suggestion that the meetings represented a degenerate version of an ancient fertility cult.

Gowdie and her friends copulated with their spirits and also with the Devil himself. Her comments on the Devil's person suggests that some sort of artificial phallus of horn or leather may have been used: 'His members are exceeding great and long; no man's members are so long and big as they are . . . (he is) a meikle, black, rough man, very cold; and I found his nature as cold within me as spring-well water . . . He is abler for us that way than any man can be, only he is heavy like a malt-sack; a huge nature, very cold, as ice.'

Other activities on these occasions included eating, drinking, mischief-making and romping through the countryside. Once they entered a dye-works at Auldearne, and bewitched the vat so that ever afterwards it would only dye black, the Devil's colour. Isabel Gowdie claimed that she and other witches had the power to turn themselves into hares or cats, and said that once when she was a hare she was chased by dogs and only just escaped by running through her own house and out into another one.

She had a little horse on which she rode to meetings, crying to it 'Horse and Hattock in the Devil's name!' Or rather, she seems to have flown, though whether through the air like the traditional witch on a broomstick or simply skimming along the ground, 'even as straws would fly upon a highway', is not quite clear from her evidence. The impression given of covering great distances in an unorthodox manner with dreamlike ease is typical of witches' accounts of their travelling, and supports equally the theories that they were victims of total delusion or that the various toxic ointments with which they rubbed themselves, and the ceremonies in which they indulged, created in them a state of light-headedness; so that actual long journeys on foot or horseback did indeed pass for them in an effortless, timeless manner.

Visit to Fairyland

She described a visit to fairyland undertaken in this manner, a claim which would have appeared credible at that period, when respectable and sensible people in Scotland believed that fairies led a real existence, similar to and alongside man's own, though hidden away for the most part in fairy mounds and little-frequented uplands. It may be that there were actual, remote communities living in such places, hill-tribes who had been driven into retreat many centuries before by more advanced invaders (see FAIRIES). More probably, all such communities had died out long before the 17th century, but their legend survived and perhaps was applied to bands of outlaws. It is quite possible that Gowdie really did, as she said, visit their abode, since an understanding between local outlaws and local criminals is at least as likely, on a practical plane, as the supernatural connection between witches and fairies in which Gowdie herself believed. Although some contemporary commentators were inclined to believe that fairies were neither angels nor devils but 'of a middle nature', wanderers on the face of the earth – Isabel Gowdie was apparently in no doubt that fairy tribes were hosts of hell, and identifiable with the demonic spirits at coven meetings, one of whom was actually called Thomas a Faerie.

'I was in the downie hills . . . the hills opened, and we came to a fair and large braw room in the day time . . . and I got meat there from the Queen of Faerie, more than I could eat. The Queen of Faerie is brawly clothed in white linen, and in white and brown clothes; and the King of Faerie is a braw man, well favoured, and broad faced. There were elf-bulls, routing and skoyling up and down there, and affrighted me.' Here she saw the Devil making elf-bolts, those famous and lethal weapons which sound, from their description, like prehistoric flint arrowheads – another pointer to the fairies' ethnic origins: 'The Devil sharps them with his own hand, and delivers them to Elf-boys, who whittles and dights them with a sharp thing like a packing needle.' Later she herself was taught how to use them: 'We have no bow to shoot with, but span them from the nails of our thumbs.' The Devil took her and the others on what sounds like a coven outing; they shot and killed a ploughman and then Gowdie herself brought down a woman.

Murder by Magic

The Auldearne witches also achieved murder by the more devious traditional method of a clay image, the essential 'magic murder' which was a capital offence in Britain long before other witchcraft practices came into this category. The company in this case wished to destroy the Laird of Park's male children:

> John Taylor brought home the clay, his wife brake it very small, like meal, and sifted it with a sieve, and poured water among it, in the Devil's name, and wrought it very sore, like a rye-bowt (a rye-pudding); and made of it a picture of the Laird's sons. It had all the parts and marks of a child, such as head, eyes, nose, hands, feet, mouth, and little lips. It wanted no mark of a child; and the hands of it folded down by its sides . . . We laid the face of it to the fire till it strakened (shrank in the heat); and a clear fire round about it till it was red like a coal. After that we would roast it now and then; each other day there would be a piece of it well roasten. The Laird of Park's whole male children by it are to suffer, if it be not gotten and broken, as well as those that are born and dead already . . .

On another occasion Gowdie and several intimate friends dug up an unchristened child in the graveyard; the object seems to have been to use it in spells rather than to offer it to the Devil in direct sacrifice. They shared the body with another coven, as a generous folk doctor might share a rare herb he had collected. Their own piece they buried in the middens of a neighbouring farmer, as a means of magically 'taking' his crops. By other long-distance charms they similarly 'took' milk from cows, but they do not seem to have had the milk or crops for themselves, or to have derived any personal benefit from their spells other than the pleasure of seeing the farmers discomforted.

Apart from the vandalism of these acts there is an alternative aspect: what was sterile and 'wasted' to the victim of the witches' attentions could fairly be said to be 'fertile' to the Devil-god who was supposed to be the mystic recipient of the goods thus wasted. In much of the behaviour of the Auldearne covens there seems to be an element of mysticism, however debased, a concept of serving the master with a logic in it beyond mere evil-doing, a hint of ritual sacrifice. Such ideas seem to be behind Gowdie's miniature ploughing session, a famous example of 'sterility magic', when she and her cronies used toads as oxen, couch-grass as the traces and the horn of a castrated ram as the ploughshare. All the accessories are carefully chosen to suggest sterility but the action of ploughing itself is clearly an imitative fertility-bringing ritual. Presumably the witches were 'taking' the land they ploughed for the Devil to sow his own harvest there.

Sacrificial Victim?

Some fifteen years after the 'man in grey' first appeared to her, Isabel Gowdie appears to have tired of her occult activities; or perhaps it was some secret squabble which led her to dramatic revelations, in which she inculpated herself and a number of others. 'Alas,' she was to tell the court at the trial in 1662, 'I deserve not to be sitting here, for I have done so many evil deeds, especially killing of men . . . I deserve to be riven upon iron harrows, and worse if it could be devised.' Was this mere histrionics, the self-dramatization of a personality who,

Isabel Gowdie said she flew to the witches' gatherings on a horse, though whether they flew through the air or skimmed over the surface of the ground is not clear. A famous picture of witches flying, by Goya

for years, had fed on the heady ideal of its own evil power?

Psychologically she is a most interesting puzzle. If we are to believe that, even n her confession, she was still serving the ends of her Satanic master, it is arguable hat she *wanted* at this point to die, and hat she may even have been elected by her coven as the sacrificial victim in a decadent version of the immemorial pagan rite – the killing of a god-substitute in order to ensure the reigning 'god's' continuity.

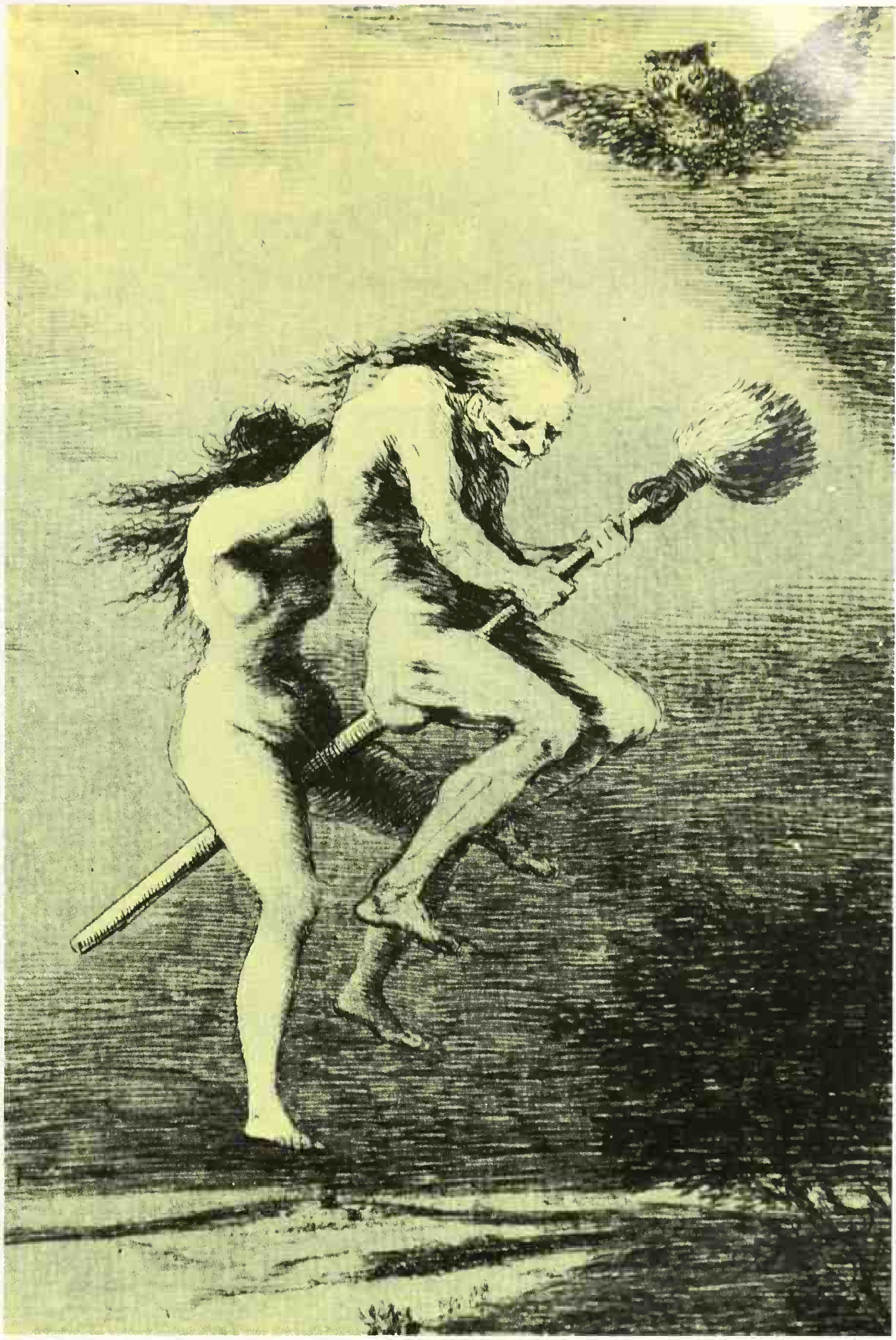
Seeker of Limelight

An alternative explanation of her behaviour s that something caused a complete hange of heart in her, and that her words of repentance were genuine. A number of the women arraigned before the court were obviously confused or senile but his does not seem to have been the case with Gowdie, who impressed everyone with her apparent sanity and coherence. There is no sign of her 'confession' being a tale that grew and altered with the telling; in the course of four separate examinations she never once contradicted herself.

The most likely answer is that she was emotionally abnormal, a seeker of limelight with only a theoretical grasp either of the reality of other people's lives or of the punishments that might be meted out to her, but certainly not mad by the criteria of her own society, or perhaps, ours. Her tale obviously contains elements of fantasy, possibly drug-induced – the flying, the hape-shifting – but probably also a strong basis of fact. Most witches, and Gowdie is no exception, commonly confessed to forms f witchery that were already well-recognized. It was as if they were bent, in practice as well as in 'make-belief', on fulfilling a legend already there for them.

GILLIAN TINDALL

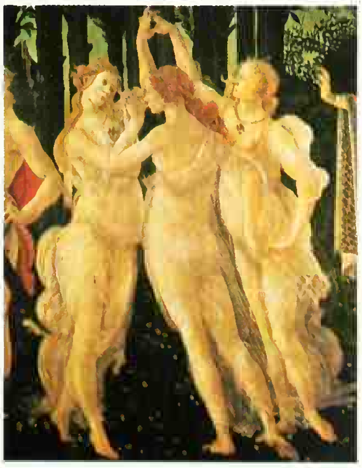
FURTHER READING: Christina Hole, *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (Rowman, 1977) and *Witchcraft in England* (Collier-Macmillan, 1966); M. W. Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies* (Octagon Books, 1972).



Mansell Collection

Grace

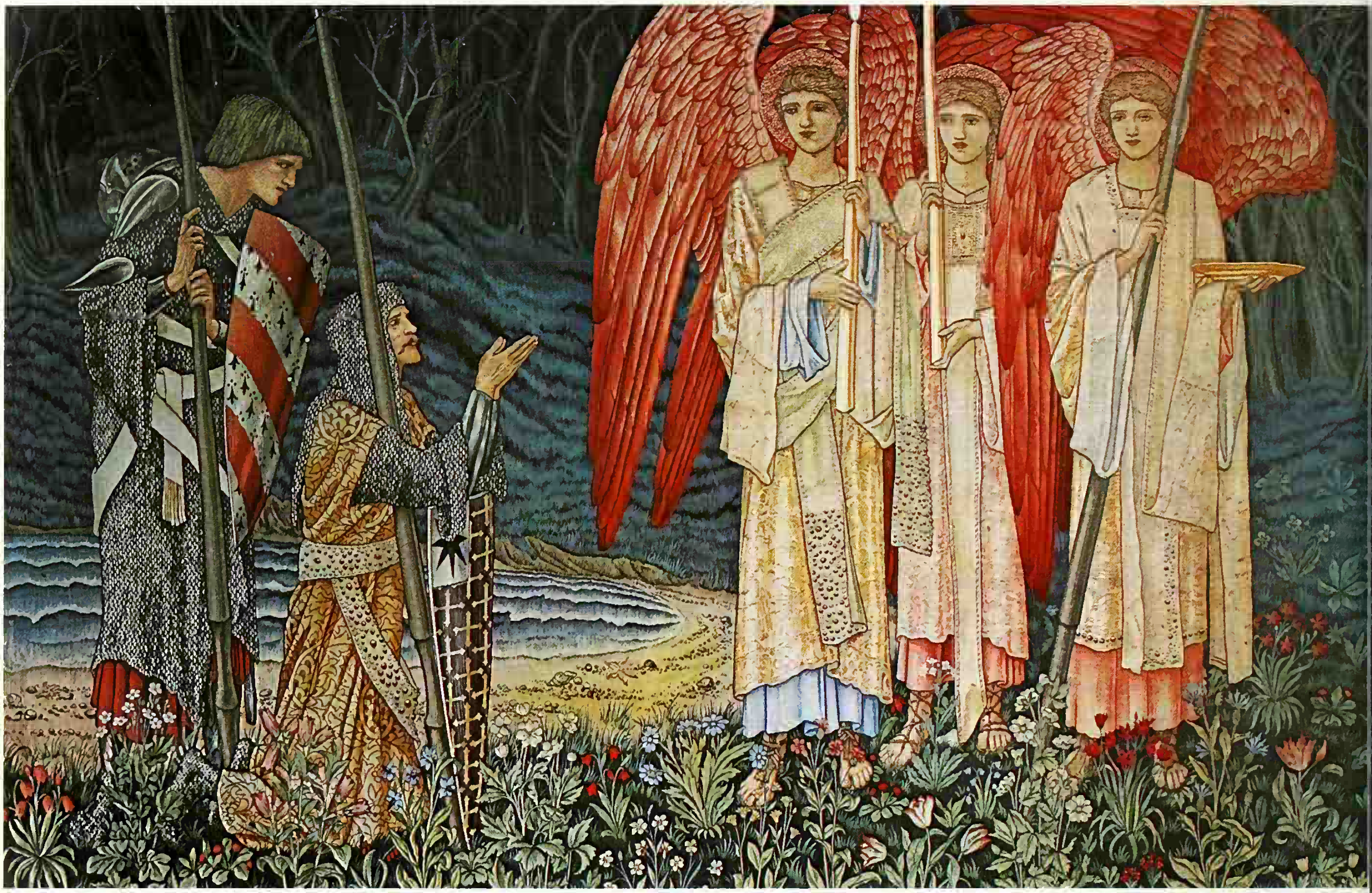
In Christian theology, the undeserved favour of God which grants a man salvation; in the New Testament usually translates the Greek *charis* (see GRACES): views of it have differed considerably in different Christian denominations; St Paul says, 'For by grace you have been saved by faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God' (Ephesians 2.8): a 'state of grace' is the condition of being free of sin and inspired by the strengthening goodwill of God.



Graces

The three *Charites* (plural of *charis*) of Greek mythology, Aglaia (the radiant), Thalia (the flowering) and Euphrosyne (joy), personifications of grace and charm, companions of the love goddess; originally there were more than three of them and they stood for the joy and beauty of fertile Nature; associated with flowers, especially the rose and the myrtle; later, they conferred on human beings not only beauty and charm but also wisdom, intellectual power and artistic ability.

GRAIL



The knights of the Round Table rode out in search of the Grail, the precious relic of Christ which was guarded in a mysterious castle. But in the end the winning of the Grail brought the end of their fellowship

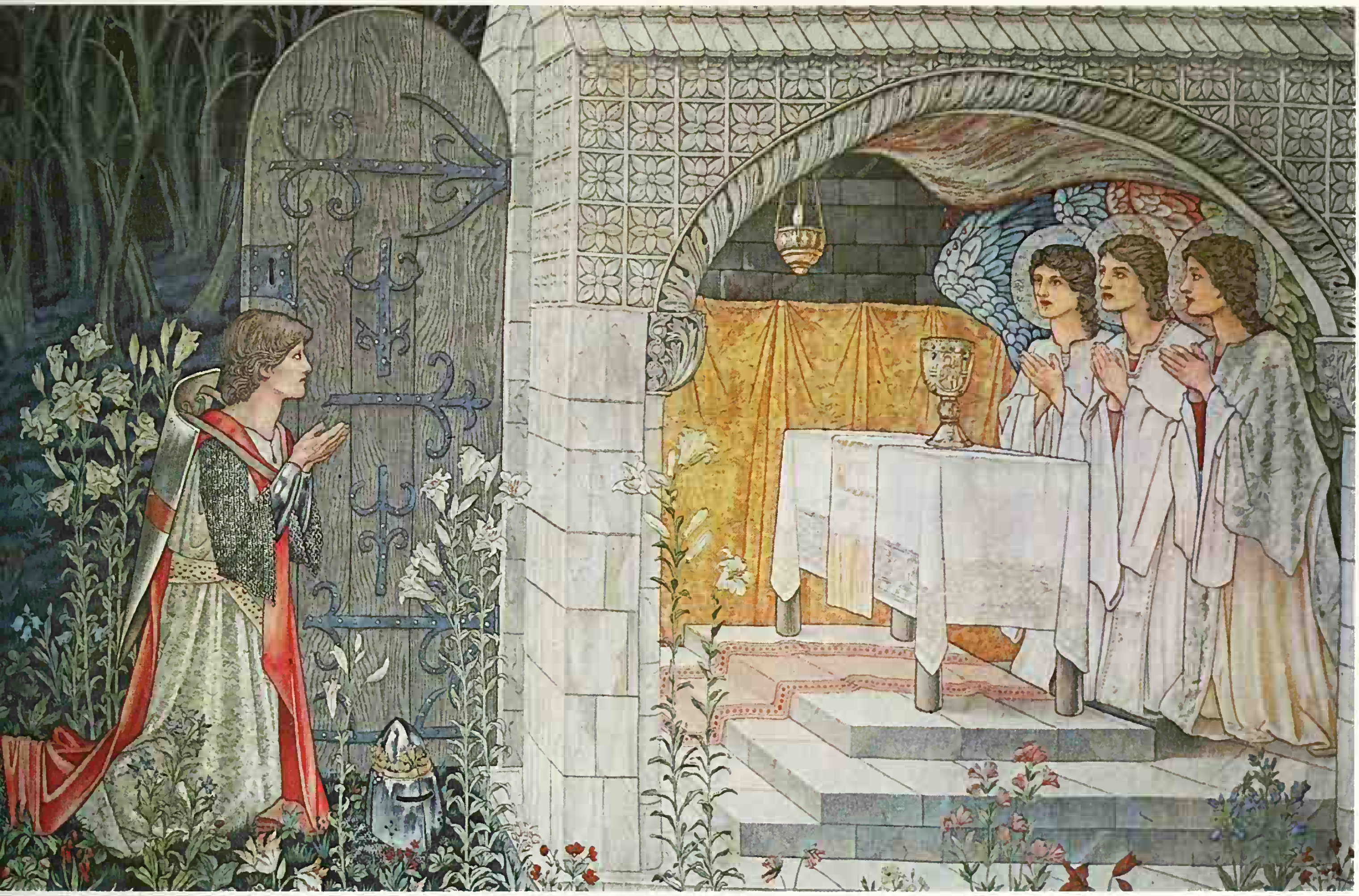
FULL OF ADVENTURE and excitement, of wonders and enchantments, the stories of the Grail are particularly enthralling for their air of mystery, of some tremendous secret that is hinted at but not revealed. We are not told exactly what the Grail means. It is unimaginably sacred, unimaginably precious. It is the fruit of blessedness, the essence of all sweetness, the perfection of paradise, the centre of high secrets and mysteries, but essentially its secrets are 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'.

The origins of the Grail have been searched for in Christianity, in paganism, in Byzantine, Persian, Jewish and Mohammedan traditions. Traces of gnostic ideas have been revealed, and hints of possible Templar and Cathar influences. For the different stories that have come down to us vary very considerably, and the great American authority R. S. Loomis plaintively observed that 'the authors of the Grail texts seem to delight in contradicting each other on the most important points.'

The stories contradict each other because there is no single Grail legend but a number of variants embroidering on not one but several themes. They tend to be rambling and inconsistent because they were originally told, not written. They are part of the larger mass of Arthurian legends, with their remote origins in Celtic paganism, spread through western Europe by travelling story-tellers who altered the stories, forgetting or misunderstanding parts of them, inventing other parts, and giving the tales a new emphasis and a new significance (see ARTHUR).

Shorn for the moment of most of their enticing details, the Grail legends are basically about a knight who comes to an eerie and magnificent castle which is the home of a crippled king, the Fisher King or Maimed King. In the castle the hero sees a magic sword and a lance which is dripping blood. During a lavish feast he

Essentially its secrets are 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'



Birmingham Art Gallery

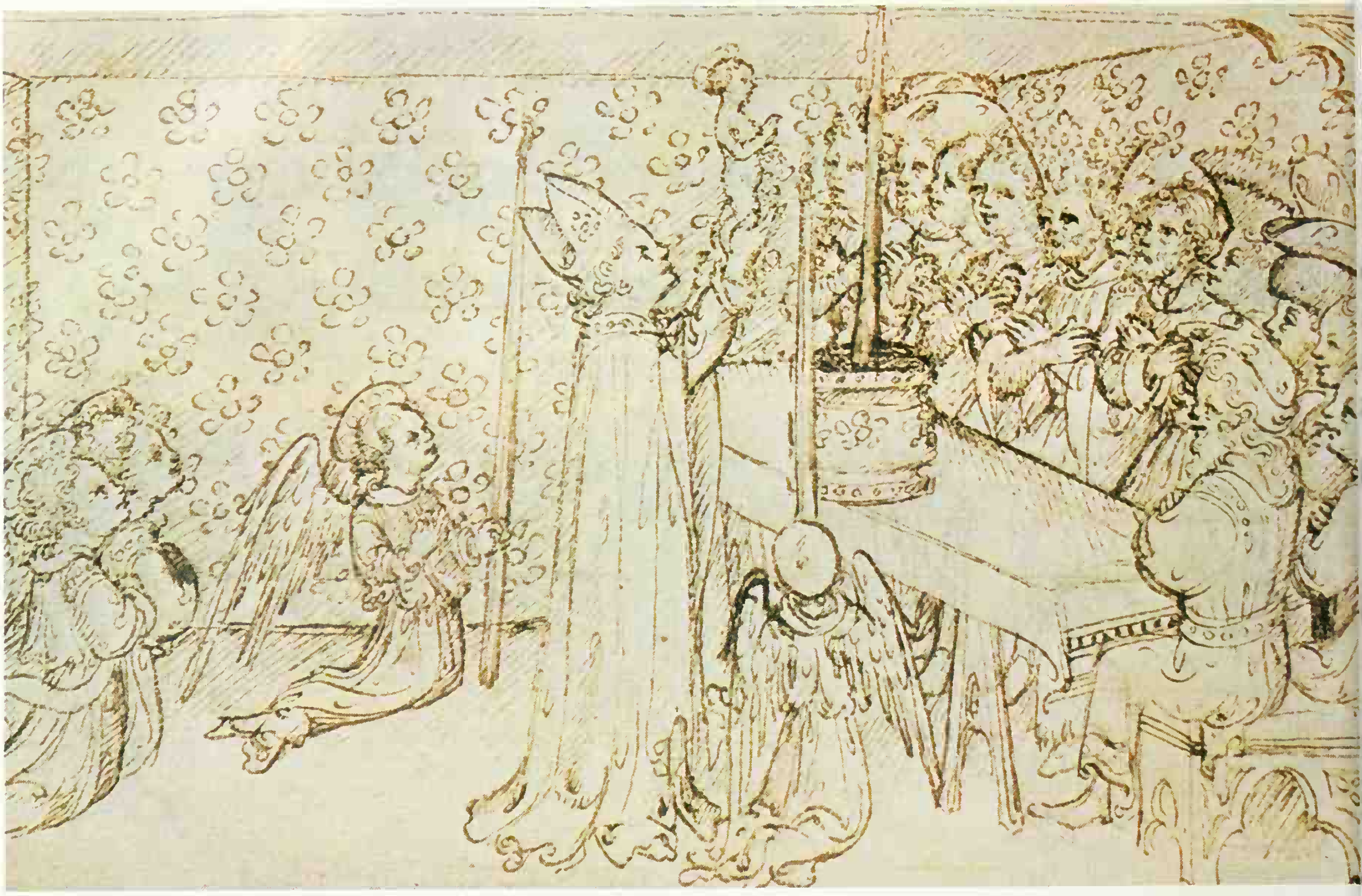
Vision of the Holy Grail, detail from a tapestry by William Morris, to the design of Burne-Jones. The Grail is shown as the cup of the Last Supper. An angel holds two other sacred objects of the legends, the dish and the lance. Galahad kneels at the door of the chapel while Bors and Perceval, who were less spiritually perfect, are further off

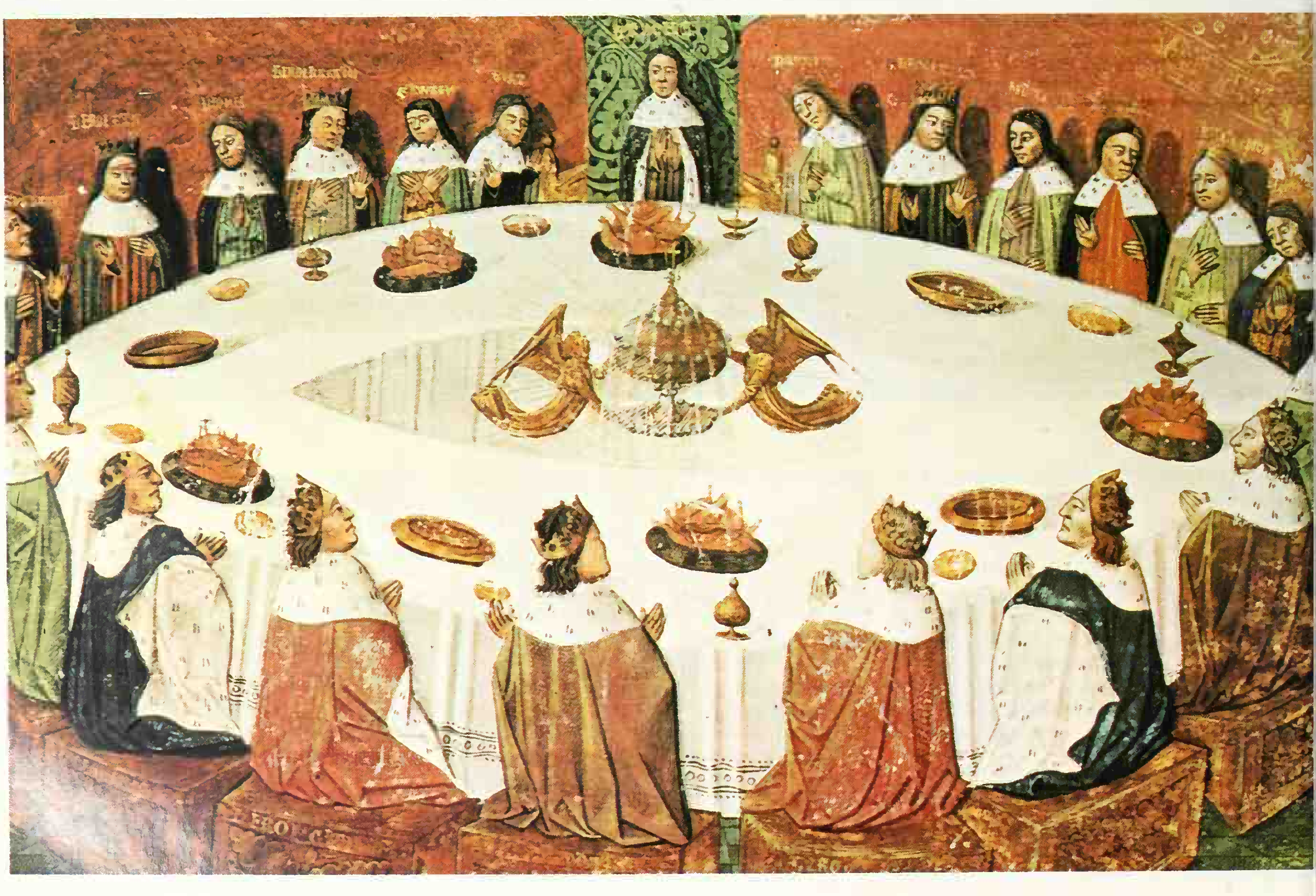
sees the Grail itself, variously described as a dish, a cup, a ciborium (the vessel in which the sacred host is kept, a cup with an arched cover surmounted by a cross), or even as a stone. The Grail is carried in procession during the feast, or sometimes itself serves the feast. The hero is supposed to ask a question. If he fails to ask it, he has failed in his quest and calamities follow. If he asks the right question, the Fisher King is healed and, in some versions, the Waste Land which he rules is once again restored to fertility.

The Otherworld Quest

Looming dimly in the background behind the medieval legends are older Irish and Welsh stories in which a hero visits the otherworld, sees its marvels and mysteries, and sometimes seizes one of its treasures. The close connection between the Grail and feasting is one of the clues to its origins in Celtic mythology, which is rich in 'vessels of plenty', magic vessels which provide limitless quantities of food and drink. Feasting was one of the great Celtic pleasures and naturally the feasting in the otherworld was beyond anything to be found in this one. The smith god Goibniu, for instance, brewed beer in a cauldron for an otherworld feast which made everyone who took part in it immortal (see CAULDRON). In many mythologies it is the food and drink of the otherworld which keeps its inhabitants forever young.

The magic vessel of plenty is not always a cauldron. It may be a dish, like the platter of Rhydderch the Generous which instantly provided the food anyone wanted, according to a 16th century list of the Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain. In *Culhwch and Olwen* (one of the stories in the Welsh collection called the *Mabinogion*) four magic vessels have to be obtained for Culhwch's wedding feast: a





Entry of the Grail

And then the king and all estates went home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong to the great minster, and so after upon that to supper, and every knight sat in his own place as they were toforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought the place should all to-drive. In the midst of this blast entered a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other, by their seeming, fairer than ever they saw afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world. And when th Holy Grail had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became: then had they all breath to speak. And then the king yielded thankings to God, of His good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the king, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly for that he hath shewed us this day, at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost.

Sir Thomas Malory *Le Morte D'Arthur*

up in which is the best of all drink; a latter or table on which everyone would nd the meat that he wanted; a horn for ouring out the drink; and the cauldron of Diwrnach the Irishman, for boiling the ieat. The variety of Celtic vessels of plenty iay be one reason for the later variations i the shape of the Grail.

The cauldron of Diwrnach was stolen rom Ireland by Arthur and his men. It was robably an otherworld cauldron originally, or the same list of the Thirteen Treasures ncludes the Cauldron of Tyrnoc (or Dyrnawg) the Giant, which would boil food or a brave man but not for a coward. A imilar otherworld cauldron was seized by rthur in a Welsh poem called *The Spoils f Annwn*. 'The cauldron of the Chief of nnwn, what is its nature? Blue round its m and pearls; it will not boil the food f a coward. . . .'

Another celebrated cauldron is the one hich belonged to Bran the Blessed (see RAN). According to the story of *Branwen* also in the *Mabinogion*) this cauldron estored the dead to life: 'a man of thine lain today, cast him into the cauldron, nd by tomorrow he will be as well as he as at the best, save only that he will not ave power of speech.' This cauldron's ailure to restore speech may have something to do with the failure of some of the rail heroes to speak at the crucial moment f the quest.

Bran was probably the prototype of the isher King, whose name in some of the iedieval romances is Bron. The son of a ea god, he died from a poisoned spear ound in the foot, which might be the rigin of the Fisher King's crippling wound in the thighs. His head was cut off and taken by his companions to a great hall, where they passed a joyous 80 years in its company, never seeming to grow any older. This scene seems to reappear in the French romance *Perlesvaus*, written c 1225, in which Gawain sits down to feast in the Fisher King's hall with 12 knights, each of whom was 100 years old but none of them looked more than 40.

he Grail's close connection with eating nd drinking probably stems from its remote rigins among pagan magic vessels of plenty, Christianized as the container of the body r blood of Christ *Above* Joseph of Arimathea, he first custodian of the Grail, bearing the Christ-child (the sacred host); before him s the Holy Lance which pierced Christ's ide on the cross, described in the legends s ceaselessly dripping blood *Below* The rail appears to the knights of the Round able and provides each man with the food he nost desires: it is shown in this 14th century rench MS as a ciborium, the container f the consecrated host

At the Grail Castle

The oldest surviving romance of the Grail is the unfinished *Conte del Graal* (or *Roman de Perceval*), written c 1180 by the French poet Chrétien de Troyes, who says that he based it on a book his noble patron had given him. The principal hero is Perceval, an uncouth young man who was brought up in seclusion by his widowed mother in the remote wilds of Wales, from which he made his way to Arthur's court. He knew nothing of the ways of the world but was advised by an older knight not to talk too much or pester people with questions.

Trying to find his way home again, worried by the fact that his mother had fainted when he left her, Perceval came to a river and saw a man fishing from a boat. The fisherman invited Perceval to his castle nearby. At the castle, a squire came in, carrying a white lance which dripped blood from its point. Curious but mindful of advice, Perceval asked no questions. Next a beautiful girl came in, carrying in her hands 'a grail', made of gold, set with jewels and giving off an intensely brilliant light. The company sat down to eat and with each course the Grail passed before them but Perceval reigned in his curiosity and 'did not ask concerning the grail, whom one served with it.'

Perceval was shown politely to bed but next morning the castle was completely deserted. He rode out over the drawbridge, which was promptly raised behind him. He shouted to whoever had raised it but there was no answer. Riding away into the forest, he met a maiden who told him that the castle belonged to the rich Fisher King, who had been wounded in battle by a javelin which pierced both his thighs. He was now crippled and fishing was his only pastime. Perceval had done ill by not asking about the lance, and worse by not asking about the Grail, for his questions would have cured the Fisher King 'and much good would have come of it'. What held his tongue was his sin against his mother, who had died of grief for him.

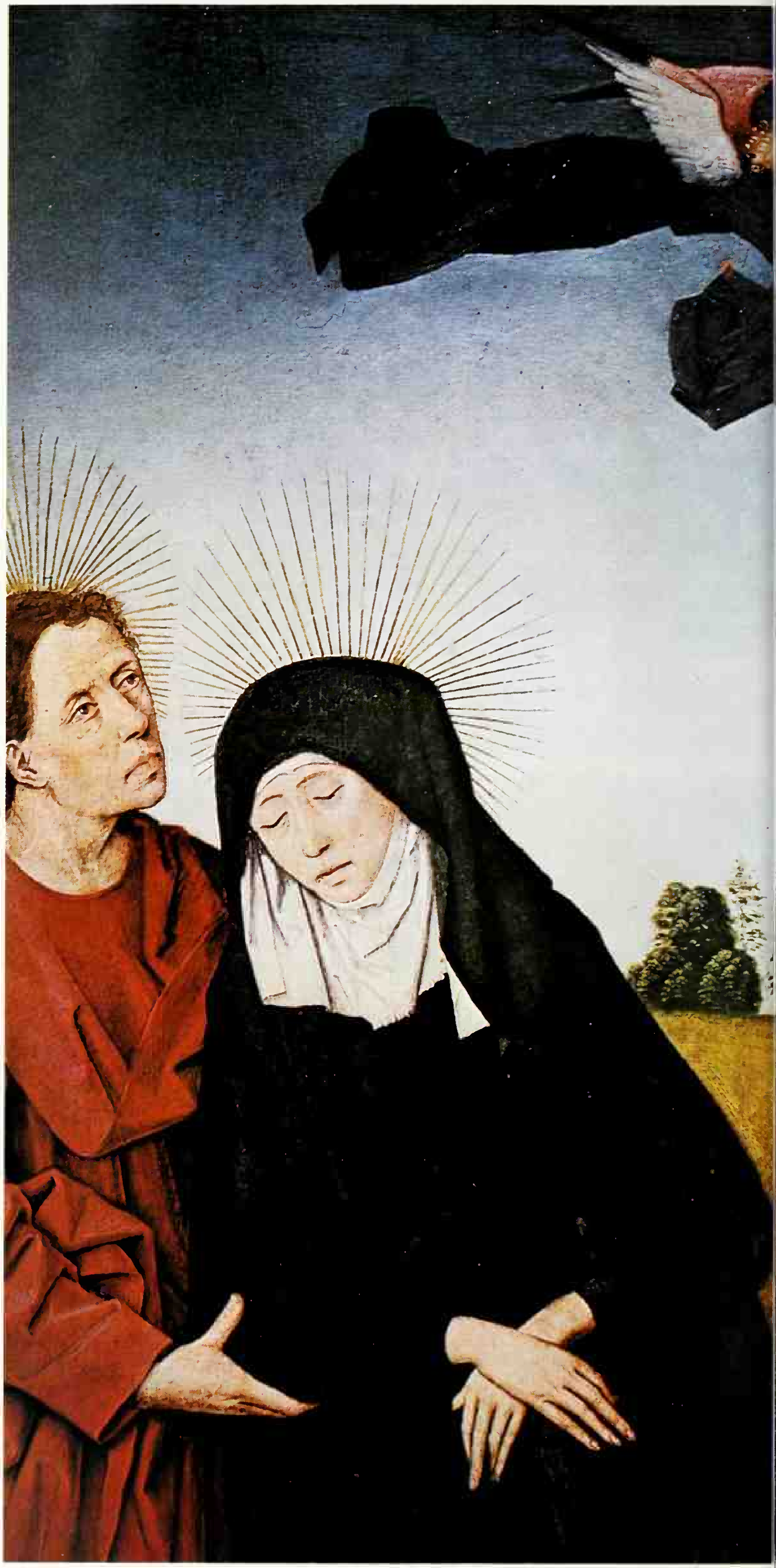
Perceval returned to Arthur's court, where a hideously ugly damsel – 'never was there creature so loathly save in hell' – rode in on a mule to reproach him. 'Fortune is bald behind, but has a forelock in front . . . you did not seize Fortune when you met her.' He should have asked why the lance bled and who was 'the rich man whom one served with the grail.' If the Fisher King is not healed, 'Ladies will lose their husbands, lands will be laid waste . . . and many knights will die.'

Perceval was determined to discover the answers to the two questions. For five years he rode out, proving his mettle in many a strange adventure, but in all this time he never went into a church or worshipped God. One Good Friday he met a knight who reproached him for bearing arms on the day Christ died. Perceval went to a holy hermit to confess his sins. The hermit told him that the one who was served with the Grail was the father of the Fisher King. What it served him with, and all that he lived on, was the sacred host. On this diet he had lived 15 years without ever quitting his room. The hermit told Perceval to 'believe in God, love God, worship God', to go to church and to serve his fellow men. At this point the story breaks off.

The Question

Partly because it is unfinished, the story raises more difficulties than it solves. The lance is not explained, nor why the question should heal the Fisher King. Confusingly, there are two kings in the castle (as in many of the later romances). There are three different explanations of Perceval's silence. The Grail is described at the end as a large dish on which the sacred host is served to the Fisher King's father, but most uncanonically by a woman instead of a priest. All the same, it is a hauntingly powerful story.

Some authorities doubt whether Chrétien himself wrote the last part of the tale but as we have it, at any rate, it is clearly not a pagan story, even though it uses motifs which were originally pagan. This is driven home by the sound Christian advice which the hermit gives Perceval at the end.



In the legends the Grail and the Lance are both connected with the body and blood of Christ, torn and spilled to save men from death and the Devil, and also the sacramental food and drink of the Mass, in which Christ himself was present, the sustenance which a Christian should most desire. Angels collecting the crucified Christ's blood in cups, as Joseph of Arimathea was said to have collected it in the Grail

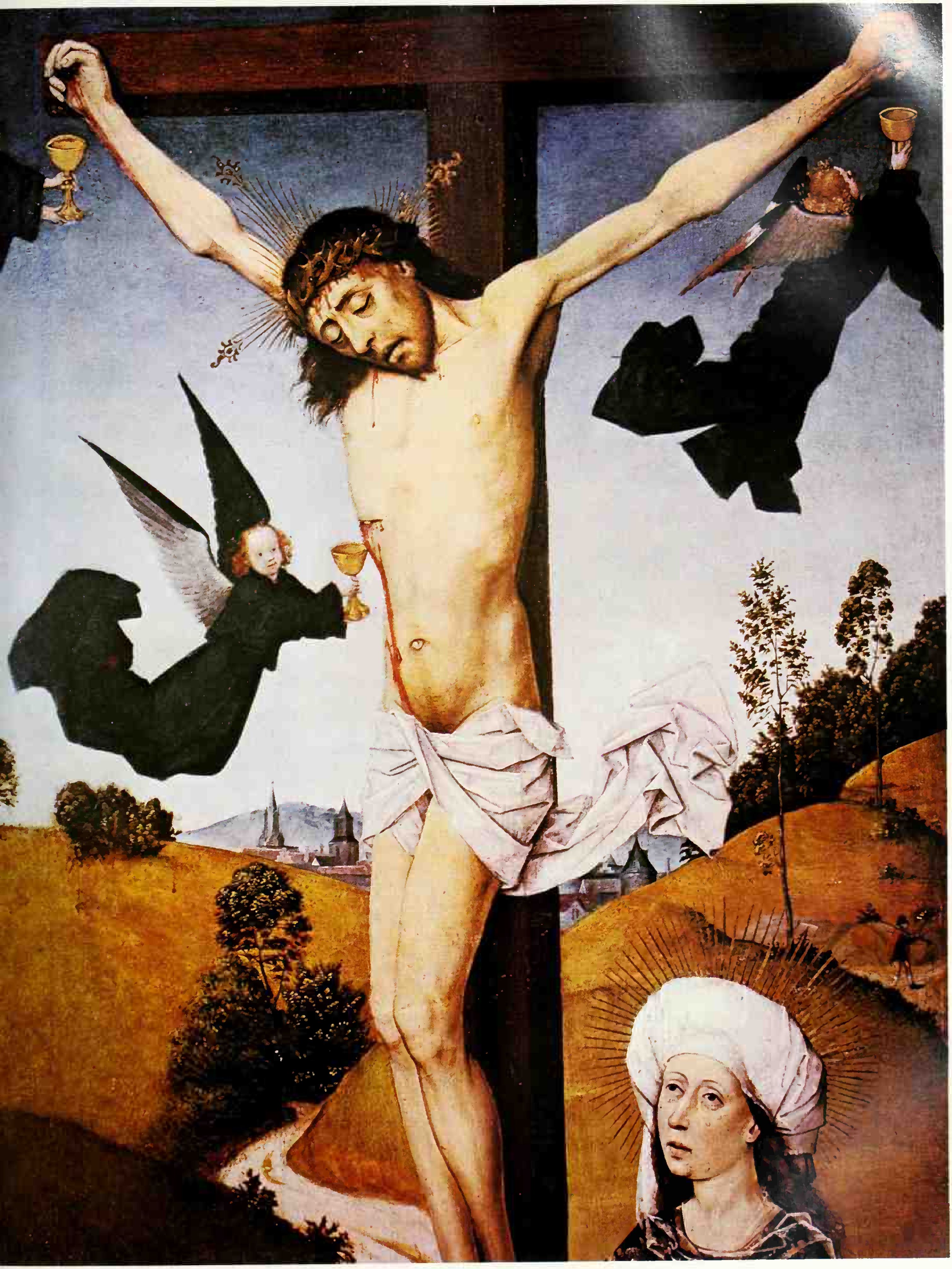
One of the pagan motifs is the question Perceval should have asked, 'Who is served with the Grail?' A similar question is asked in an Irish story known as *The Phantom's Frenzy*, existing only in a 16th century manuscript but possibly dating from the 11th. The hero, Conn of the Hundred Battles, goes to the hall of the sun god Lug, where he sees a vessel of gold, a vat of silver and a golden cup. A girl in a golden crown serves Conn with food but before giving him ale she asks, 'To whom shall this cup be given?' Lug answers, 'Serve it to Conn of the Hundred Battles'. As she keeps repeating the question, Lug names each of Conn's descendants who will rule Ireland after him. At the end Lug and his hall vanish.

The Blood of God

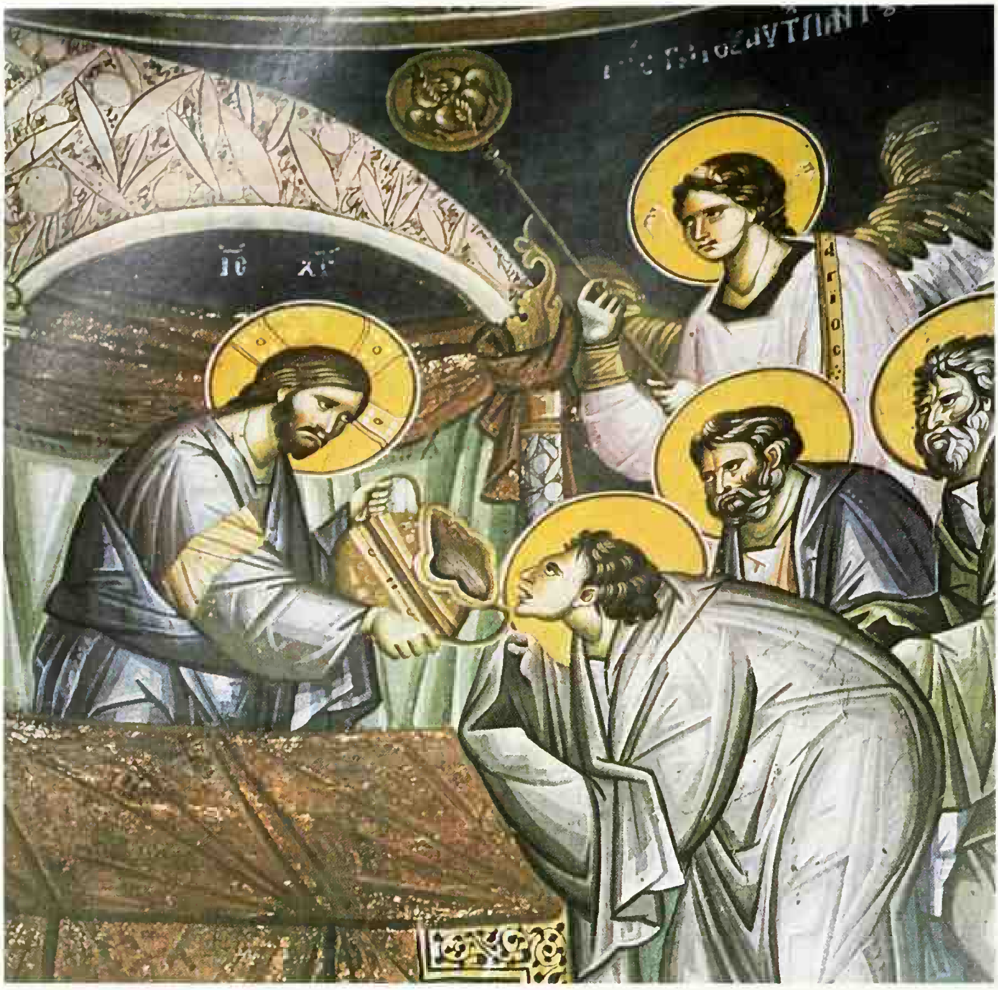
After Chrétien's death, other authors turned their attention to the Grail legends and the old pagan themes were increasingly Christianized. Chrétien's *Conte* itself was continued in four different sequels. In the First Continuation (probably before 1200) Gawain sees the 'rich grail', which moves about by itself at the feast, serving each course and filling the wine-cups. The lord of the castle explains that the lance which bleeds is the Holy Lance with which a Roman soldier pierced Christ on the cross, 'and at once there came out blood and water' (John 19.34).

Gawain is also told that the broken sword he had earlier seen in the castle is the one which destroyed the whole realm of Logres (Britain). At this point Gawain, most irritatingly, falls asleep and the rest of the explanation is lost, but an interpolation by another author brings in Joseph of Arimathea, the rich Jew who took Christ's body from the cross for burial (see also GLASTONBURY). Joseph caused the Grail to be made and took it to Calvary, where he caught in it the blood that flowed down over the feet of the crucified Jesus. After Joseph's death the precious vessel passed on to his descendants, down to the Rich Fisher.

Joseph D'Arimathie, c 1200, by the Burgundian poet Robert de Borron, says Joseph used the Grail to collect the blood of Christ crucified and that it was the same chalice which Jesus used at the Last Supper, when he took a cup and the apostles drank of it and he said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many'



Kunst und Museums Bibliothek der Stadt, Köln



'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.' The belief that the cup of the Last Supper was guarded somewhere in secret was an immensely exciting one in an age which believed in the miraculous power of sacred relics. The Last Supper vessel in the unusual form of a two-handled jug, from St Clement's at Ohrid, Yugoslavia, 13th century

Ronald Sheridan

(Mark 14.24). With his brother-in-law, Hebron or Bron, Joseph left Palestine for foreign lands. He founded the table and service of the Grail, which only those who believe in the Trinity and lead clean lives may attend, and there they have everything their hearts desire. An empty seat at the table, corresponding to the seat of Judas at the Last Supper, is reserved for a descendant of Bron (this is the Siege Perilous which Galahad would later fill). On the Grail table is a fish, the symbol of Christ, placed there by Bron, who in consequence is called the Rich Fisher.

Fruit of Blessedness

Both the Lance and the Grail have now been connected with the blood of Jesus, the blood which was spilled to save men from death and the Devil. The Grail itself has been identified as the cup of the first Mass, containing the wine which was not merely figuratively but in all reality the life-blood of God. Most of the great relics of the life and death of Jesus had been found, or at least it was believed they had been found, and the idea that the cup of the Last Supper was still in existence and was guarded somewhere in secret was an immensely exciting one in an age which believed in the miraculous power of relics. What had been long before a magic vessel of plenty, which in giving food gave immortal life in the otherworld, was now the Christian vessel which gave immortality, the heavenly life after death of the faithful Christian.

Not that all the remaining romances identified the Grail as a cup, far from it. In another variation on Perceval's adventures, *Parzival* by the Bavarian poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, written c 1200–1212, the hero comes to the Maimed King's hall and sees the Grail, 'which surpasses all earthly perfection'. The company sit down to feast and 'whatsoever one reached his hand for, he found it ready, in front of the Grail, food warm or food cold, dishes new or old, meat tame or game . . . for the Grail was the fruit of blessedness, such abundance of the sweetness of the world that its delights were very like what we are told of the kingdom of heaven.'

Parzival refrains from asking questions 'for courtesy's sake', because it would be impolite, but later he is reproached for callousness towards his crippled host. 'You should have felt pity for your host, on whom God has wrought such terrible wonders, and have asked the cause of his suffering.'

The Grail, it turns out, is a stone. 'There never was a human so ill but that, if he one day sees that stone, he cannot die within the week that follows. And in looks he will not fade. His appearance will stay the same . . . the same as when the best years of his life began, and though he should see the stone for 200 years, it will never change, save that his hair might perhaps turn grey. Such power does the stone give a man that flesh and blood are at once made young again.' From the stone 'derives whatever good fragrances of food and drink there are on the earth, like to the perfection of Paradise. I mean all things the earth may bear. And further the stone provides whatever game lives beneath the heavens, whether it flies or runs or swims.'

The parallel with the pagan vessels of plenty is very clear and the Grail castle recalls the pagan otherworld, where there is no aging and no disease, and where the immortals feast on whatever they like best. But the Grail is now a stone, which resembles the Philosophers' Stone of the alchemists. It too surpassed all earthly perfection, cured disease, and kept its possessor forever young. It is likely that Wolfram was also indebted to the stone in a legend of Alexander the Great, the stone which was heavier than any quantity of gold but, when a little dust was sprinkled on it, was lighter than a feather, and which was an object-lesson in the renunciation of worldly pride and ambition (see ALEXANDER THE GREAT).

The Waste Land

In a brilliant book, *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) which was influenced by Frazer's *Golden Bough* and which in turn influenced T. S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land', Jessie L. Weston argued that the central themes of the Grail legends were connected with pagan fertility ritual, the restoration to vigorous life of the dying god of vegetation; that the Fisher King was so named because the fish is a symbol of swarming life; and that beneath the surface of the legends can be discerned the rites and symbols of a secret cult, which had transmuted primitive fertility ritual into an 'initiation into the secret of Life, physical and spiritual'. The sacred objects of the legends were the sacred symbols of the cult: the dish from which the worshipper ate the communal meal, the lance and cup together as symbols of male and female, the sources of physical life, and the Holy Grail itself as the source of spiritual life.

The majority of scholars have rejected this theory, for lack of adequate evidence of the existence of any such cult. What is generally accepted, however, is that the theme of the Waste Land preserves the ancient belief that the fertility of the land depended on the life, vigour and sexual potency of the ruler. In Chrétien the Fisher King is wounded in both thighs, which is thought to be a euphemism for the genitals.

So long as the king was maimed, no crops were sown, no child was born, no meadow turned green, no beast or bird bore young

n Wolfram's *Parzival* there is no uphemism: the Maimed King was pierced hrough the testicles by a poisoned spear.

In a comparatively late romance, *Sone de Nansai*, dating from after 1250, he Fisher King – usually said to be a escendant of Joseph of Arimathea – is dentified with Joseph himself. When God vounded him in the loins, to punish him or marrying a heathen princess of Norway, he land of Logres fell under an enchantnent. So long as the king was maimed, no rops were sown, no child was born, no neadow turned green, no beast or bird ore young.

In the *Suite du Merlin*, of c 1230, it s the lance of the Grail castle which deals vhat Malory later called 'the dolorous troke'. The hero Balaain (Balin in Malory) ame to the castle of King Pellehan. Attacked y the king and searching hurriedly for a veapon with which to defend himself, he ound a lance standing point downwards in vessel of silver and gold. He snatched up he lance and drove it through Pellehan's highs. Instantly the walls of the castle ollapsed. Outside, Balaain found that the rees had fallen, the crops were destroyed nd the inhabitants were all dead. From hat time on the land came to be called the Vaste Land.

Logically, the all-important question vhich the hero must ask at the Grail castle ught to heal the Fisher King and restore he Waste Land to bloom. In some of the omances it does, but in by no means all and there is no suggestion of the question estoring an arid land to fertility in the rish story of *The Phantom's Frenzy*). In Chrétien, the Waste Land is not mentioned t all or, at most, is only hinted at. We are old that if the Fisher King is not healed, ands will be laid waste,' but this seems to e seen as the result of coming wars, not f infertility.

In the First Continuation Gawain ucceeds in restoring the fertility of the Vaste Land by asking about the lance. But ven so, he has not fully achieved the quest or if he had stayed awake long enough to sk about the Grail, 'no one could tell the reat joy that would have come of asking.'

The more determinedly Christian the ntentions of the author, the more the Waste Land theme is thrust into the background, resumably because of its obvious pagan connotations. The *Queste del Saint Graal* says that the father of the Maimed King was killed by the blow of a sword, which unleashed such wrack and ruin that 'never again did the land requite the ploughman's toil, for no corn sprouted there, nor any other crop, nor did the trees bear fruit, and there was a dearth of fish in pond and stream.' Later, the Maimed King himself tried to draw the same sword from its sheath and was instantly transfixed through the thighs by a flying lance. But though the Grail-winner, Galahad, heals the Maimed King nothing is said of restoring the Waste Land. On the contrary, the Grail itself is taken away from the land altogether.

End of the Fellowship

In the *Queste* the Grail is the dish from which Christ ate the Passover lamb with his disciples. It was brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea and was guarded by his descendants at their castle of Corbenic. It retains some of its earlier functions, for the sight of it heals the sick and when it appears at King Arthur's court it provides each person with the food he desires. But Arthur and his knights are told that the quest of the Grail 'is no search for earthly things but a seeking out of the mysteries and hidden sweets of our Lord, the divine secrets which the most high Master will disclose . . .'

The *Queste* is part of the compilation called the Prose *Lancelot* (1215–1230), which deals with the adventures of Lancelot and his love affair with Guinevere. There are warnings in the *Lancelot* that his adultery with Guinevere will debar him from achieving the Grail, and the author of the *Queste* invented a new character as the Grail-winner, Galahad, who was 'so grounded in the love of Christ that no adventure could tempt him into sin.'

When his knights swore the quest of the Grail, King Arthur lamented that this meant the end of the fellowship of the Round Table. He was right, for the *Queste*'s author intended Galahad's success to be a demonstration of the superiority of Christian ideals and the inadequacy of the worldly ideals of romantic chivalry. The one knight who is utterly dedicated to God and entirely free from any contamination of worldliness is the only one who fully achieves the quest.

Galahad, Perceval and Bors receive Mass from the Grail at the hands of the crucified Christ himself and 'it seemed as though the essence of all sweetness was housed within their bodies.' But only to Galahad was revealed at that moment 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate, my heart was ravished with such joy and bliss . . . for so great a host of angels was before me and such a multitude of heavenly beings, that I was translated in that moment from the earthly plane to the celestial . . .'

Here the supreme experience of the Grail is the vision of union with God, the discovery of the 'secret and hidden wisdom of God' which St Paul had preached: 'what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Corinthians, chapter 2). The Grail has translated Galahad from the barren Waste Land of life in this temporal and imperfect world to the eternal rapture of heaven.

Malory took the bulk of his Grail material for the *Morte D'Arthur* from the *Queste*. The Grail is taken away from Britain because of the sinfulness of the inhabitants. Galahad dies and the Grail is carried up into heaven. This is immediately followed by Lancelot's return to Guinevere and the public denunciation of the lovers. The knights divide into warring factions, the fellowship of the Round Table is destroyed and Arthur's reign comes to its bitter close.

(See also GALAHAD; GAWAIN; LANCELOT; PARSIFAL.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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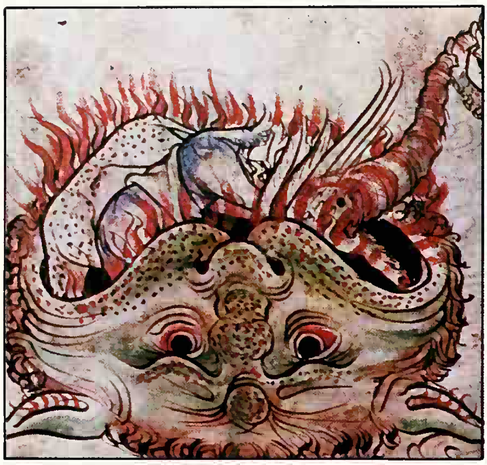
GREAT BEAST

'AND I SAW A BEAST rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.' This creature is the Great Beast of the Apocalypse, whose identity is concealed behind hints, symbols and a numerological puzzle.

In chapter 11 of the book of Revelation an angel announces that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God. This proclamation is immediately followed by the titanic rebellion of the powers of evil and the coming of Antichrist. Satan appears as the great red dragon, there is war in heaven, and the dragon is hurled down to earth and his angels with him. A voice in heaven prophesies, 'woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.'


Bodleian Library

The mouth of hell, from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, probably influenced by the Great Beast of the Apocalypse, which was like a leopard and to which the Devil gave his power and throne and great authority on earth

In chapter 13 this 'woe' takes the form of the beast which rose from the sea. It was like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. 'And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.' One of its heads 'seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed.' The whole earth followed the beast with wonder and worshipped it, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?'

The beast held sway for three-and-a-half years, during which it made war on the saints and conquered them, it had power over every tribe and people, every tongue and nation, and everyone on earth worshipped it except only those whose names were written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the crucified Christ.

'Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth.' This was the first beast's lieutenant, which worked great signs and wonders, and which ordered the people to make an image of the first beast and worship it. It caused everyone to be marked on the right hand or the forehead with the mark of the first beast, which was its name or its number. 'This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is 666.'

The Antichrist

The early Christians believed in a coming struggle between God and a great opponent, an evil counterpart of Christ, who would claim to be God, work delusive miracles in parody of Christ, and deceive people into worshipping him (see ANTICHRIST; BELIAL). Some commentators on the book of Revelation identified the second beast, the one which rose from the earth, as Antichrist because it worked signs and wonders. But it is more likely that for the author of Revelation the Great Beast 666 was Antichrist though he does not use the term Antichrist itself.

The second beast is called 'the false prophet', a reference to the 'false Christs and false prophets' of whom Jesus spoke, who will show signs and wonders to lead the elect astray (Mark chapter 13). Its ancestry goes back further, to Deuteronomy (chapter 13), where the people are warned against a prophet and dreamer of dreams who will show a sign or a wonder and try to persuade them to worship false gods. The passage in Mark suggests that, as the second beast is the false prophet, it is likely that the first beast is the false Christ.

The first beast unites the characteristics of the four beasts seen in a vision in the book of Daniel (chapter 7), which stand for four empires which in turn oppressed the Jews – Babylon, Media, Persia, and the Greek empire of Alexander the Great. The three-and-a-half years of the beast's rule also come from Daniel (chapter 12), the 'time, two times and half a time' after which the power of the persecutor will come to an end, the persecutor being Antiochus Epiphanes, the first human model for the figure of Antichrist.

The beast comes up from the sea, which in Revelation is the home of the forces which oppose God. This harks back to Mesopotamian, Canaanite and Jewish myths in which to create the ordered universe, or keep it in being, it is necessary for the monster of the deep, the chief of the powers of chaos, to be defeated (see CREATION MYTHS; DRAGON). When Revelation comes to the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, we are told that 'the sea was no more'.

The Whore of Babylon

It is generally accepted that if the Great Beast is Antichrist in the spiritual sphere, on earth it is Rome, the empire which now oppressed Jews and Christians. The worship it insists on is the cult of the deified emperors, and the false prophet probably stands for the local authorities responsible for the imperial cult. The fact that the Great Beast comes from the sea (from abroad) and the false prophet from the earth (from at home) may reflect this. In chapter 17 the whore of Babylon (the city of Rome) is seen riding on a scarlet beast, which is probably identical with the Great Beast. The seven heads of this beast stand for hills (the seven hills of Rome) and also for seven kings (Roman emperors).

The head that was mortally wounded but healed looks like an allusion to the persistent rumours that Nero, the persecutor of Christians, who committed suicide in 68 AD, was not really dead but would return with an army to re-conquer Rome. The image of the beast recalls Caligula's orders, issued in 30 AD but never carried out, that his statue should be placed in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, an intended sacrilege which horrified the Jews.

In chapters 19 and 20 the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies do battle with the forces of God, led by the rider on a white horse, the Word of God. They are decisively defeated and then slaughtered. The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into 'the lake of fire that burns with brimstone', where they will be 'tormented day and night for ever and ever'. The Devil himself is shut away in the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

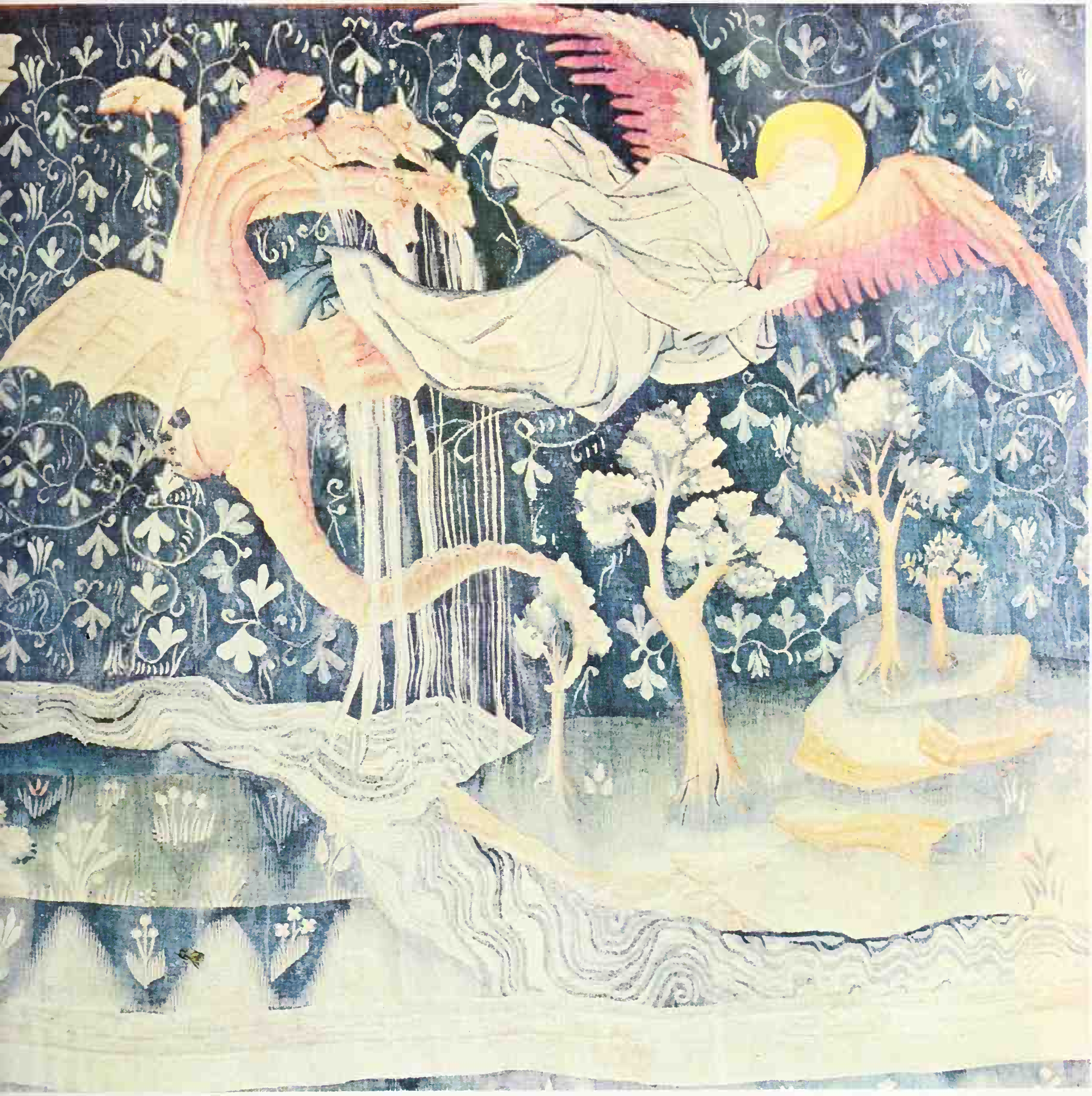
Number of the Beast

The number riddle which has produced so many solutions, some of them singularly eccentric, is an example of gematria (see GEMATRIA). Evidently the Great Beast's name or title will add to 666 if its letters are turned into numbers. The most obvious candidate for the honour is Nero, but Revelation was written in Greek and his name in Greek, Neron, adds to 1,005. However, if his Greek title Neron Kaisar is turned into Hebrew letters, the total is 666 (nun – 50, resh – 200, waw – 6, nun – 50, qoph – 100, samech – 60, resh – 200). The identification with Nero also has the advantage of explaining the western tradition that the number was really 616, for if the Latin Nero Caesar is turned into Hebrew letters, it adds to 616.

Austin Farrer pointed out the interesting connection between 666 and the number of Jesus, which is 888. Eight is the number of rebirth and resurrection, and 888 shows that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, which was a Sunday, the eighth day from the beginning of Passion week. The Friday on which Jesus was crucified, and on which the powers of darkness apparently triumphed, was the sixth day from the beginning of that week. So if 888 is the number of Jesus, it is fitting that 666 should be the number of Antichrist. In addition, 8 and 666 are connected because 8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = 36 and if the same process of serial addition is applied to 36, the total is 666.

FURTHER READING: G.B.Caird, *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (Black, 1966); Austin Farrer, *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964).

Facing page **Tapestry showing the Great Beast which rose from the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, and which represented Antichrist in the spiritual sphere and on earth the Roman Empire and the cult of emperor-worship**



Michael Holford

GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

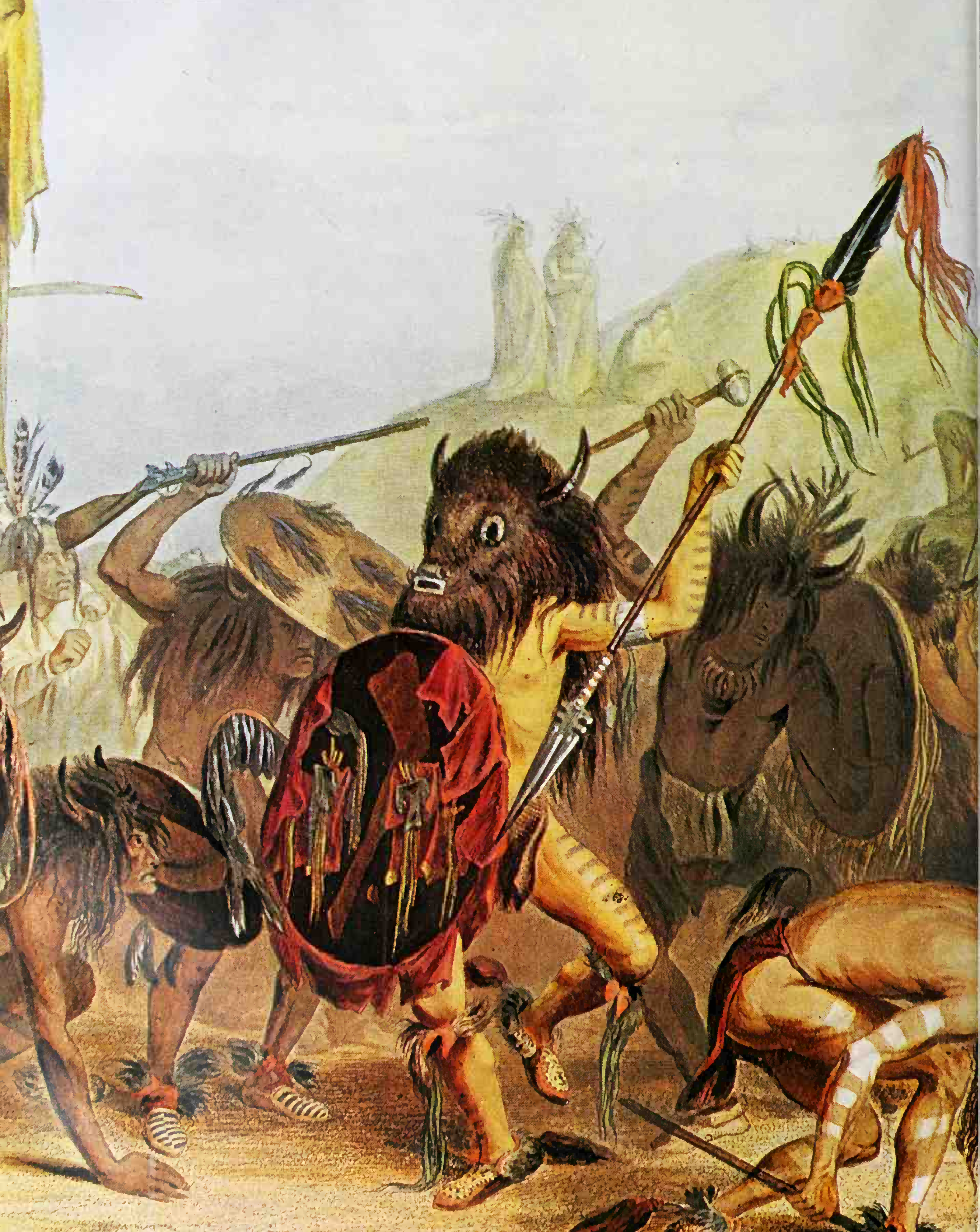
N THE NEOPLATONIST PHILOSOPHY which domnated the ancient world in the early cenuries AD, the universe was thought to proeed from a first principle in a continuous eries of ordered stages, a 'great chain of eing' which descends from God through the anks of spiritual beings and the visible eavens down to humankind, animals and he earth. Humanity's position in this rdered, hierarchical world is in the middle: s embodied souls, spiritual beings on the rontier between the spiritual and material vorlds. They have to control those beings elow, and their own bodily life, by reason, but at the same time can look upward in contemplation and travel in the spirit up the great chain of being to its source in God.

This view of reality continued to dominate European and much Moslem and Jewish thought throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Platonism of the Renaissance reached back directly to classical Neoplatonism and produced a more passionate and imaginative understanding of the great chain of being which was very powerful for a time. Man was thought of as a microcosm, a little universe, containing in his own body and mind all the ordered levels of the great chain (and responsible for keeping them in good order). Not until the 17th century was this picture of the world superseded. Its influence, not only on philosophy and theology but on European art and literature, had been immense.

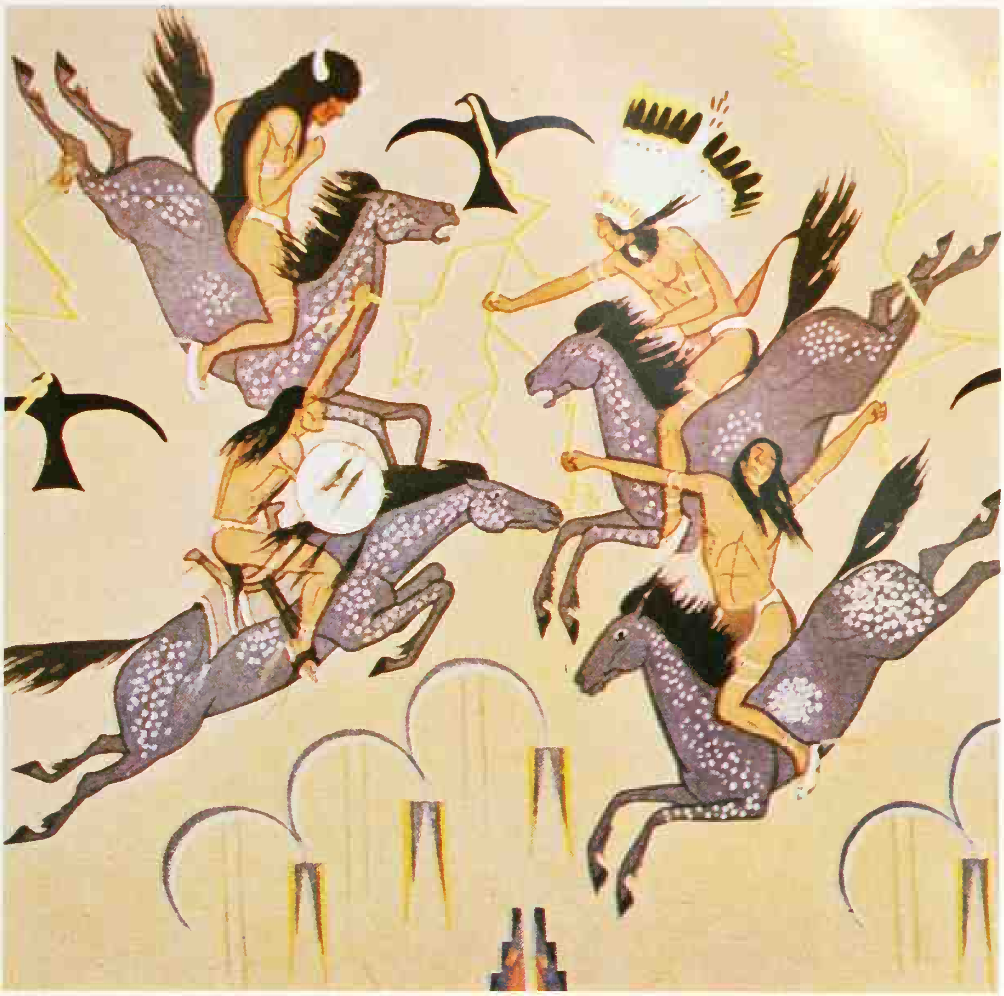
In art, the hierarchical universe under God found expression in the architecture and decoration of Byzantine churches, and in literature the concept of the great chain of being is particularly apparent in English writing of the 16th and 17th centuries. Its last great champions in England were the Cambridge Platonists, who fought a determined though unsuccessful battle against the newer view of the universe, practical, mechanical and non-hierarchical, which accompanied the scientific developments of the 17th century.

(See also MACROCOSM; NEOPLATONISM.)

Great Plains Indians



n Great Plains Indian mythology, the buffalo vere believed to have once been a race of savage, horned human beings, the predecessors and hunters of man *Left* The Mandan ouffalo dance, commemorates the emergence of man from beneath the earth by the sacred ree and the subsequent period of man-nunting, before the buffalo were metamorphosed into animals: 19th century painting oy Karl Bodman *Right* The Sioux conception of he happy hunting ground was of a place where warriors were borne through the sky on magnificent steeds; birds were believed to carry messages to heaven: the *Sky People,* a modern Indian painting



Eric Cross

Central to the American Plains Indians' view of ife were the twin ideals of unflinching bravery and union with the supernatural through visions. n their most important ceremony these aims vere united; a fearful heroism was required to ndure the tortures of the mystical Sun Dance

LONG BEFORE the white man reached North America, tribes of Indians roamed the great olains: primitive and poor, they struggled o survive the hardships of prairie life. Then, n the later part of the 18th century, they oriefly achieved wealth and power, both naterially and culturally. This change was lue to their acquisition of horses, from the vild herds that were offspring of horses orought to Mexico by the Spaniards. Mounted, the Plains Indian became a naster buffalo hunter and a fierce, dangerous warrior and this has remained he popular image of him, in spite of the act that by the mid-19th century his rule of he Plains had been destroyed by the white nan's rifle, which decimated the buffalo and (with whisky, disease and other adjuncts of civilization) killed Indians. But the Plains Indians have become a modern egend, for the glorious futility of their wars igainst the whites, their ferocity in battle – hey were perhaps the finest light cavalry n history – and their embodiment of many raditionally heroic traits.

Although the Indians reached a fairly nigh level of culture in their brief heyday, heir social and cultural structures remain comparatively simple, with none of the complexities of the Pacific Northwest tribes, r of African peoples with deep-rooted and ancient traditions. The major cultural changes wrought on the Plains tribes by the advent of the horse tended to iron out the major cultural differences among the ndividual tribes. The Comanche of the south-west, the Cheyenne and Pawnee who ought over the central plains, the Sioux and Blackfoot who ruled the grasslands near he Canadian border – these tribes and the others, in spite of language barriers and continual wars, had much in common.

The gods of the Plains Indians were rarely conceived of as a clearly structured, hierarchical pantheon. The gods or spirits were a more or less vague grouping of powers, seldom ranked as lesser or greater, not always with specifically defined attributes or supernatural roles. Some of the tribes did have a definite idea of a supreme deity, who appears in their creation or origin myths. The Dakota Sioux and the Blackfoot tend to give pride of place to the sun, but the Blackfoot complicate matters by ascribing creation to a fairly explicit 'trickster' figure, a god or spirit in temporary animal form. The Pawnee possess myths of the great god Tirawa, meaning father or 'Power Above'; but even in this case the supreme god is little more than a rather cloudy abstraction. He may or may not be identified at times with the sun or some other obtrusive natural phenomenon like thunder or the morning star. But predominantly he tends to be a character in mythological tales rather than an omnipresent god with whom man can come in contact.

The Trickster Spirit

Environment plays an important role in Plains myth and most Plains Indians ascribe godhead to the sky, the stars, the moon, the wind and so on. The Pawnee, with a sound if embryonic astronomy, were especially devoted to star gods, and share with other tribes a high regard for the hero-god of the morning star. Water gods are important to the Sioux and others; fire and thunder, constant companions to the people of the level, dry plains, appear in many tales of mighty spirits. Sometimes the fertility goddess known the world over as the Great Mother or Earth Mother, plays a role in the old tales – probably carried over from the days before the horse, when maize was as economically important as buffalo.

Animal gods occur frequently in the Indian myths, sometimes as one of the great gods temporarily in animal form, more usually as a generalized spirit or power in that form appearing for a specific purpose, and it is in these explicit guises that the Indians make contact with the supernatural in their prayers and worship. In the myths and tales, however, one such animal spirit takes definite precedence: the trickster figure, one of the most complex but fascinating concepts in all mythology.

This god, or hero, is a lesser deity but at the same time he is one of the first gods, who existed before creation. His actions are often heroic, fighting great battles, righting wrongs and punishing evil-doers, and sometimes his role expands into that of the creator of the world or of mankind. Yet many of the trickster stories involve him in the most farcical mischief-making, showing him to be a clever but small-minded practical joker.

The trickster goes by many names among North American tribes: in the Pacific Northwest he is the hero Raven; on the Plains, he is Coyote to the Pawnee. The Cheyenne call him 'Wihio', translatable sometimes as 'white man', sometimes as 'spider'. The Blackfoot trickster is Napi, and has much in common with the Cheyenne's: his name can mean 'white old man' but is often rendered as just 'old man', especially when his role of creator is implied.

The myths of the trickster as creator often show him bringing about the origin of some natural phenomenon more or less by accident, or as the casual side effect of some

joke or piece of mischief. Often the joke is on the gods: the trickster fools and bedevils them into some action that will directly or indirectly benefit the earth and man.

There seems to be little contact, in the sense of direct worship, between the trickster and his believers. He figures in myths that explain Nature and in comic tales, and the Indians seem content to leave it at that. When they wish to make representations to the supernatural world, they direct their prayers and supplications to animal gods or Nature spirits, which can be seen as concentrations of spirit power that have become focused in animal form. So it is not to the buffalo god or the eagle god that the Indian prays – but to the buffalo or eagle power, one area of supernatural power that flows to man through certain animals or natural phenomena, such as thunder power or wind power. These animal or natural powers serve to a great extent as guardian spirits. Tribal spirits are dictated by tradition and the old tales; but individuals can acquire their own direct contact with a specific spirit or power. Some individuals acquired deeper knowledge of the tribal spirits and closer contact with the supernatural, and these became shamans, or medicine-men.

Role of the Medicine-Man

The medicine-man had certain prescribed functions within the tribe. He often looked after the community's major religious relics and paraphernalia, and led the religious ceremonies. He made the broad appeals to the gods or powers on the tribe's behalf, and was often the source of vital prophecies about matters such as the location of the buffalo or projected success in war. Quite often the medicine-man and the tribal chief were the same person, religious and secular leadership in one.

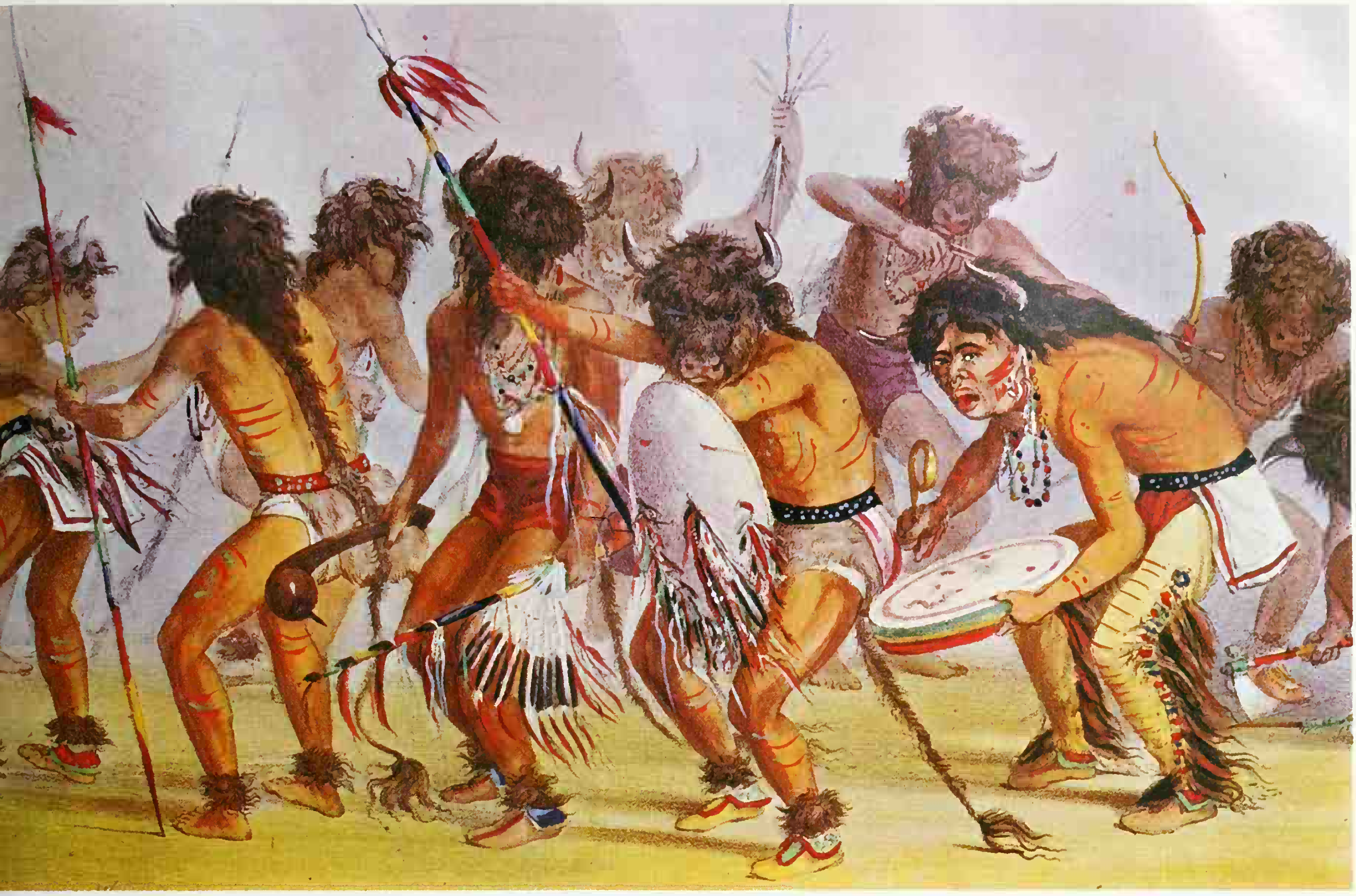
Semi-nomadic peoples like the Plains Indians see their shamans differently from more settled, agricultural tribes. The hunter, it seems, places more value on individualism. Any man can make contact with the supernatural, so to some extent every man is his own shaman. The medicine-men are not a separate priestly caste, as occurs in other primitive organizations, with priests jealously guarding their rights as the sole repositories of power, monopolizing the links between men and gods. Plains Indian medicine-men may have extra-sharp 'antennae' for godly matters, an extra capacity for religious ecstasy or magical power. But the ordinary Indian has these abilities too. In terms of curing the sick, for instance, the ordinary tribesman knows enough rites and prayers for purposes of first aid, while the medicine-man's more extensive spirit contacts provide specialist help.

Indian ceremonials primarily involved special dancing, accompanied by songs and prayer chants, backed by music from drums, rattles and whistles. Often the dancing took on magical overtones: a Blackfoot war dance required the dancers in full battle regalia to gallop their horses round the fire and then to dance on foot in a manner representing the proud dancing step of horses. Most tribes had special magic rites to 'call' the buffalo, often similarly involving mime of a buffalo herd. Tribes like the Pawnee who combined agriculture with hunting had special planting and harvesting rituals with magical protection for the fields and insurance of good crops. At one time the Pawnee sacrificed a captured girl from an enemy tribe as part of their planting rite, possibly a remnant of Aztec influence.

Many Plains tribes engaged in semi-religious and semi-social ceremonials, including one called the Grass Dance in which specially costumed celebrants enjoyed a feast, gave away possessions as a form of self-denial and imposed temporary celibacy on themselves. Scalp dances, in honour of victorious warriors, can also be seen as both social and religious celebrations. And celebration was the undercurrent beneath the ritual that became not only the highest expression of the Plains Indians' religious individualism, but also the greatest single religious event of the year. It was the terrible and exalting Sun Dance, the core of Plains Indian religious and magical belief.

Agony of the Sun Dance

The Indian warrior's personal path to the gods, the supernatural powers, was by way of the Sun Dance. It was basically a 'vision quest', the most sacred and crucial of all the ways in which visions could be obtained. The whole superstructure of the religion depended on the vision, in which the supernatural became manifest to the individual man; without it he would have no guardian spirit, no 'good luck' magic, no supernatural


Hamlyn Group Library

The Indians owed to the buffalo their food, clothing, livelihood and wealth, and something of the animal entered into every ceremony
Left **Sioux Indians in ceremonial dress, the medicine-man bearing the badge of the buffalo**
Right **A variant form of the buffalo dance served as a rite of sympathetic magic, the dancers imitating the animals which they wished to summon for the hunt**

assurance of survival and success. Visions might come through ordinary dreams, or could be induced by fasting, by magical means such as sleeping near the grave of a once-powerful shaman, even by drugs. Peyote, derived from the mescal cactus that is Nature's own hallucination-producing drug, became popular in the late 19th century as a quick route to visions (see PEYOTE CULTS). But always the most memorable and most admirable visions sprang from the awful tortures of the Sun Dance, still practised as late as the 1940s. The Indians knew as well as any early Christian ascetic the value of mortification of the flesh as an open door to hallucinations; they also saw the Sun Dance as a splendid test of their courage and endurance.

The ceremony had only little to do with the sun itself, in the sense of active worship of that god. The Sioux name for it is more specific, 'Sun Gaze Dance', for the dancer's suffering was magnified by his being required to perform the ritual while under the brazen midsummer sun, shining through the open-roofed medicine lodge. The effect of the sun was in turn increased by the purifying preparations of the sufferer before the dance, when he went without food and water, often for several days. Perhaps he would also have spent time in the 'sweat house', a primitive sauna bath consisting of a closed hut with steam rising from water thrown over hot stones.

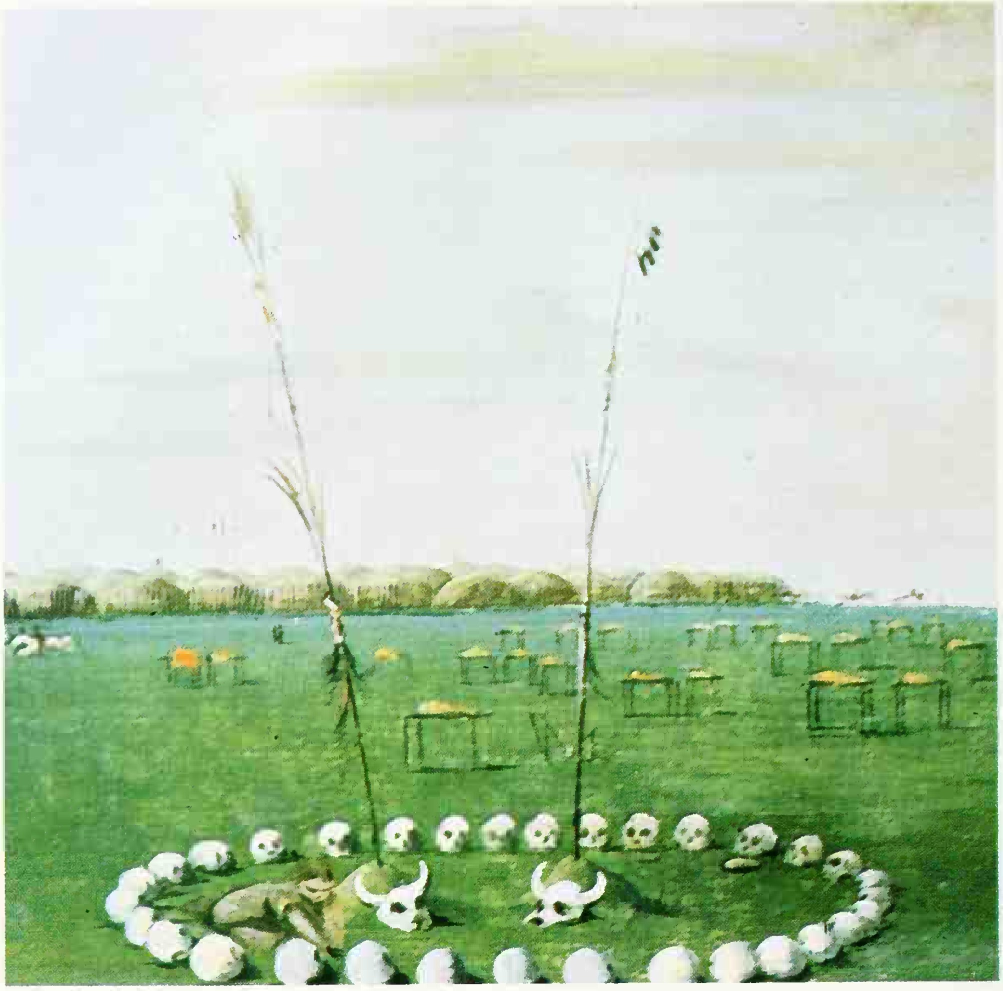
Once purification was completed, the medicine-man or some other appointed elder of the tribe would bring the dancer to the appointed place and make the final preparations. He would be ritually painted, complete with simulated tears on his cheeks to anticipate the real ones that would flow. Then two sets of vertical incisions would be made in the dancer's pectoral muscles, and sometimes also in the upper muscles, and back. The incisions were arranged so that wooden skewers could be thrust through the muscle, looking like the pins put into cloth by a seamstress to mark her line. Rawhide ropes would then be tied to the skewers, their other ends attached to a high 'sun pole'.

The dancer had to lean his full weight on the ropes, that is on the skewers, and dance round the pole under the cruel sun until the skewers were torn free from his flesh. Sometimes heavy shields would be hung from the back skewers, or other means used to wrench them free in the same way. Sometimes, too, the dancer would be lifted off the ground by the ropes, to hang until his flesh gave way. And throughout the agony he would sing ritual songs, and appeal to the powers for a special vision.

When release from the skewers came, the terrible wounds would be treated by the medicine-man, and the dancer would go alone to his lodge to await a vision out of the pain-drenched and delirious sleep that might follow – unless, of course, he had been lucky enough to experience hallucinations while on the ropes. Because his whole culture had prepared his mind with a firm belief in visions and their necessity in a warrior's life, visions usually came – most often in the accepted form, where a particular god or power assumed animal shape, or that of some natural phenomenon. If the supernatural visitor came as a hawk, then the dancer's guardian spirit would from then on be the hawk, and his whole life would be overseen by the special power that the hawk represented.

The Sun Dance had a central role, with only the most trivial tribal variations, in the religious practice of all Plains tribes. In the later years of their decline another religious ceremony grew up, similarly common to most of the tribes, and nearly rivalling the Sun Dance in its short-lived importance. The Ghost Dance, which was performed towards the end of the 19th century in a final attempt to get rid of the white man, with the help of the ghosts of the Indian dead, and return to the old way of life, was inspired by a vision experienced by a Paiute Indian (see GHOST DANCE).

The Indian gods can be seen as a grouping of rather abstract supernatural powers, less explicity conceived of in human terms than, say, Greek or Norse divinities. When a



Behind the Plains village lie the rows of Indian dead, wrapped in skin and laid on scaffolds. The skulls are preserved and women place offerings of meat before the sun dried heads of their relatives: a Mandan village on the Upper Missouri

vision, engendered by the Sun Dance or other means, illumines an Indian's individual guardian spirit for him it also provides him with some personal magic. Many of the common amulets and talismans in use among Plains Indians were introduced through such visions – for instance, the 'thunder bow', an ornamented bow with a lance-head on one end, partaking of 'thunder power', or what we could call the power of the thunder god. It was a general talisman to bring good luck but also gave protection against lightning and against being wounded in battle.

Magic Bundles

But no amulet, no other container of magical power, protective or otherwise, could rival in importance the tribesman's personal 'medicine bundle'. The bundles were collections of odd objects and artefacts, most of which were related in some way to the form taken by the god or power in the Sun Dance vision. The objects would be wrapped in some special way, and the whole bundle would never be far from its owner – especially when some major undertaking was planned, when the bundle's power and protection would be invoked by the songs and prayers that might also have been dictated by the individual's vision.

Special taboos often went along with a medicine bundle, relating to the shape taken by the visiting spirit who conveyed its contents to the visionary. If an Indian's vision had concerned a beaver, so that he owned a beaver bundle (probably wrapped in the fur of that animal), he could never show fear of water – his guardian's favourite element. A man owning a snake bundle could never break any bone within his house. Ordinarily, though, Plains Indian beliefs were by no means as taboo-ridden as those of other primitive peoples. Such proscriptions occurred mainly in areas of life directly connected with the vision quests and the medicine bundles – such as the obvious taboo against freeing a Sun Dancer from his agony before the final tearing of his flesh, or the taboo when the tribe was on the march against anyone passing in front of the man carrying a tribal medicine bundle.

Tribal bundles were immensely powerful and venerated objects, handed down over many generations from their legendary origin – some distant divine visitation. One or more medicine pipes served as tribal bundles for the Arapaho, Blackfoot, Dakota and some others; they were never smoked but their spiritual power remained accessible. Special individuals – often medicine-men but not always – took charge of the pipes by inheritance, and through them led the tribe in prayer for prosperity, cures for the sick, victory in battle and so on. The Cheyenne put their tribal belief in a handful of ancient and sacred arrows and, among the northern branch of the tribe, a sacred hat made of buffalo skin topped with horns.

Such community bundles served active purposes as well as the passive function of tribal protection and the bringing of luck. The Pawnee used a special bundle called a 'storm eagle' – a dead eagle stuffed with magical objects – to raise storms over enemies. The Cheyenne performed spell-casting gestures with the sacred arrows before a battle, in a mime of the foe's defeat. So the general idea of magic working, like the general idea of amulets and taboos, never gets far away from the focus of the vision and the medicine bundle. The Plains Indians had no really rich store of spells and incantations for historians of magic to plunder. The Blackfoot and Cree had a few gentle love charms, involving birch bark images. Comanche medicine-men might work evil sorcery against rivals, or a forsaken maiden might throw a spell on her erstwhile lover (by burying a segment of her own flesh on a mountain peak and praying that the lover would decompose along with the piece of herself). But such elements in Plains Indians lore are comparatively rare. Certainly the men were too proud of indulge in magic: the anthropologist Ralph Linton records that among the Comanche, 'malevolent magic was never used between rivals of war age.'

So to a large extent magic, like religion, was kept firmly in its place by the Plains Indians. They were hunters and warriors, first and always – restless, wide-ranging, individualistic and proud. Life for an Indian before the white man came was usually short, always hard, often cruel; afterwards life was shorter, harder and even more cruel. So it might be said that the Plains Indians had little time or energy to spend on working out involved and sophisticated pantheons of gods with neatly arranged aspects and attributes – nor could they concern themselves with too extended and detailed approaches to the craft of magic. Perhaps they obtained most of the magic they needed from their ecstatic and agonized vision quests. And perhaps they found most of the religion they needed in their awareness of their awesome environment – the interminable prairie grasslands and the immense prairie sky.

(See also NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS; PACIFIC NORTHWEST INDIANS.)

DOUGLAS HILL

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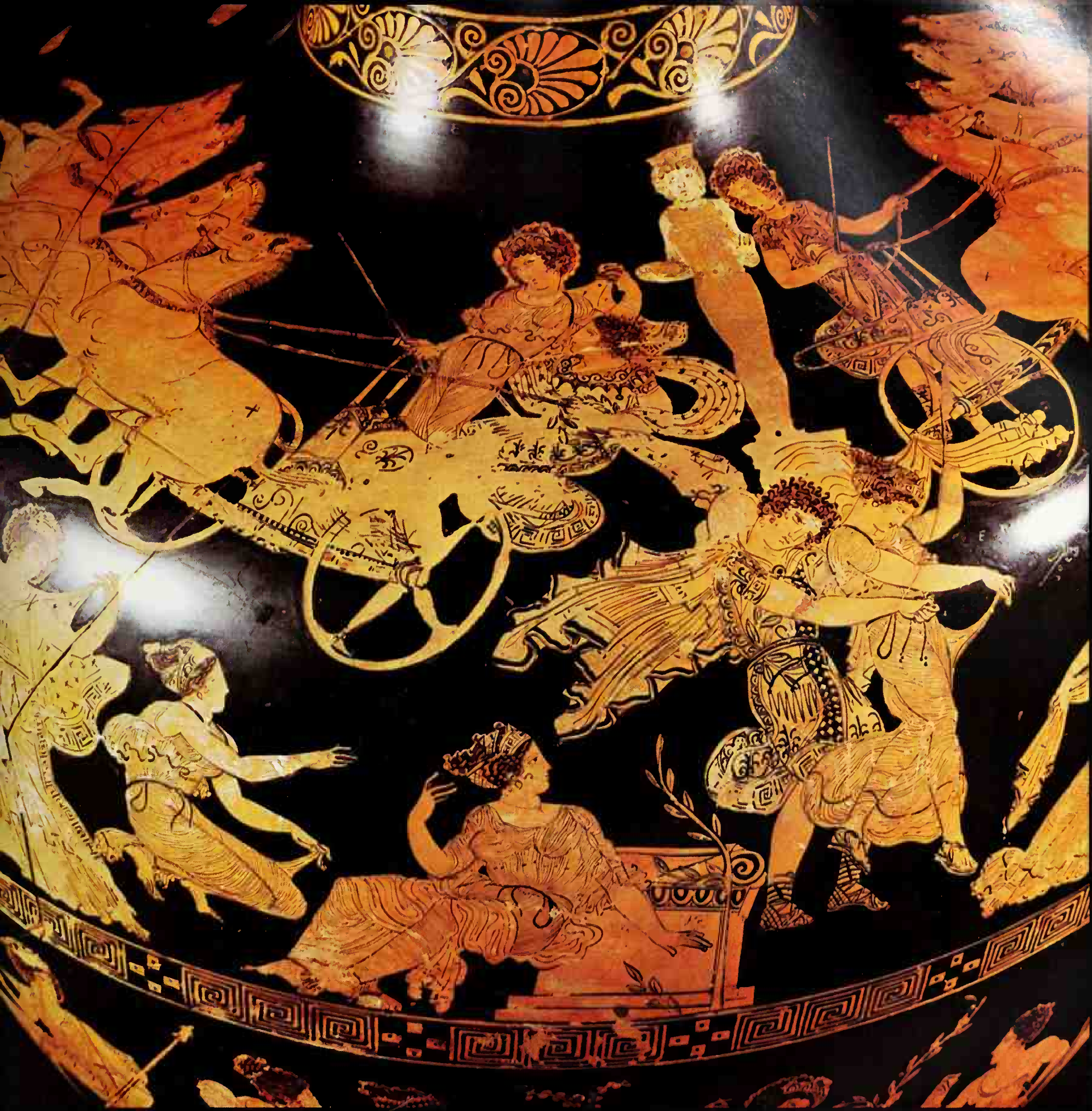

Michael Holford

GREECE

Sonia Halliday

In the religion of classical Greece elements fro
Crete blended with elements from the Greek mai
land: 'the most dramatic form of this length
process was a struggle, never quite to be resolve
between the concept of a mother goddess and th
newer concept of a dominating male god, Zeus'

THE HISTORY OF GREEK RELIGION reflect
an uneven, halting but recognizable develop
ment from magic to officially sponsore
religion; from an epoch when men had n
clearly separated themselves from Natu
and natural forces to a time when gods an
goddesses were worshipped in human shap
However, the uniformity of this proce
should not be overestimated. For mag
continued to be inseparably associated wit
religion, especially in the realms of popula
cult, just as birds, beasts and flowers co
tinued to be identified with particular god
and goddesses.

The traditional polytheistic religion
classical times incorporated, in varying form
and with varying emphasis, many surviva
from earlier periods, including the Minoa
and Mycenean periods of the Bronze Ag
especially in Nature-religion and fertilit
cults. Broadly speaking, the Greek religion
classical antiquity was an amalgamation
early Aegean with later Indo-Europea
elements, the latter having been contribute
by people who spoke Greek as one of th
Indo-European family of languages.

However, realization of this is compara
tively recent. A hundred years ago there we
no accepted objective criteria, in the form
buildings, pottery, jewellery and armou
which were relied upon to form an ind
pendent witness of the realities of the worl
which emerges in the Homeric poems. Th
history of Greece was thought to have begu
with the first Olympiad in 776 BC, an

Previous page **Castor and Polydeuces, th**
divine twins, carrying off the daughters
Leucippus. Raising her hand to her hair is th
love goddess Aphrodite and at the far lef
wreathed in laurel, is Zeus *Left* The suprem
god of classical Greece, Zeus was descende
from the great weather god of the Gree
warrior chieftains but his title of 'Cretan-bor
connects him with quite a different god an
indicates the strong Cretan strands in Gree
religion *Right* Hera, Zeus's wife, was thought
as woman deified

erything that went before including the omeric Age, was legend or myth.

Now, however, what is sometimes des- ibed as the Aegean civilization has been scovered by archeologists. In consequence, e objective criteria of Greek pre-history ach back to the beginning of the Iron Age oughly 1000 BC), and through the two illennia of the preceding Bronze Age into e earlier Neolithic period.

This vast change in outlook is mainly the sult of the work of two men, Heinrich chliemann and Sir Arthur Evans. Schlie- ann's excavations at Troy, Mycene and iryns proved that there was some historical ality behind the Homeric epics. Sir Arthur vans began to excavate the Bronze Age lace of Minos at Cnossus 70 years ago. ne of the many consequences of his factual scovery of the Bronze Age civilization of rete is that no student of Greek and Near astern religion in antiquity can afford to nore the Cretan (or Minoan) background.

This background, complex though it may , is shown by a variety of evidence collected om many different sites that date from the rliest periods to the later Bronze Age, hen the Minoan and mainland Mycenean aditions became increasingly interfused.

There is now a mass of symbols, repre- ntations on seals and frescoes, cult para- ernalia, and idols and statues collected om tombs, cemeteries, cult-rooms, altars, rines, sanctuaries and temples, which ave to be set beside the mythology, poetry nd general literature of the period. There e also numerous inscribed documents hich, although they are often fragmentary, ometimes throw light upon religious beliefs nd practices.

The abiding mystical concepts derived om Cretan religion are significantly marked the influence of a mother goddess and a ying god, associated with the bull, who later ecame worshipped as 'Cretan-born Zeus'. his Zeus, who died and was born again, as different from the Olympian Zeus of the miliar Greek pantheon. He was much ore comparable with the Greek Dionysus, so a bull god and a dying god. These two fferent concepts help us to establish dis- nctions between the Minoan and the ycenean phases of earlier Greek religion.

The historian Herodotus records that the oets Homer and Hesiod were the first to ompose theogonies, poems dealing with the origin of the gods, and gave the deities their epithets, allotted them their offices and occupations, and described their forms. It is probable that these traditional Greek theogonies derived from the Greek epics which were rooted in the Mycenean period of the late Bronze Age.

Traditional mythology recorded legends about conditions before the Mycenean pantheon of the Olympic gods became paramount. Before this time, the Titans, the children of Uranus and Gaia (Heaven and Earth) held sway. To prevent Cronus, the youngest Titan, from swallowing his baby son Zeus, his wife Rhea bore him secretly in Crete and substituted a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes for the infant, who was reared in hiding (see CRONUS). The legends about the birth of Zeus in Crete were responsible for the specific epithet of the supreme god as 'Cretan-born'. This epithet and the oriental connections of his mother Rhea, indicate that he was an old Minoan god, involved in the same basic pattern of oriental ritual which prompted the myths of Ishtar and Tammuz, Isis and Osiris, Venus and Adonis. It is probable that Greek-speaking people who arrived in Crete gave the name of their sky god to an old Minoan deity whose ritual and character can be guessed from the evidence of later times.

The Olympian Zeus was the leader of the traditional Greek pantheon. There is reason to suppose that the hierarchical organization of the gods and goddesses as portrayed in the Homeric epics reflects the actual social conditions of the Mycenean period. The Homeric Greeks (the Achaeans), burst the bonds of their own ancestral tribal organization and adapted their control of Bronze Age techniques to warfare. The martial character of the Myceneans of the later Bronze Age is exemplified in their fortification of their urban centres, in marked contrast with the unfortified cities of Minoan Crete. Similarly, the Achaean chieftains of the Homeric poems dominate the battlefield.

The heroic age of ancient Greece, as it is portrayed in Homer, represents the violent and ruthless conquest of an older, sophisticated, peaceful and refined civilization by warlike adventurers. Its richest and most important centres were away from the mainland, especially on the island of Crete; so the greatest prizes were out of reach until the Achaeans became sailors.

Syndics of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The Supreme God of All

Of course, Zeus is far more than a blend of these two elements only, Indo-European sky-god and Cretan babe or Kuros or bull (that is, Cretan fertility-spirit). To the Greeks he is throughout their history the supreme god of all . . . There is scarcely a department of nature or of human life with which he was not connected by his worshippers. This is reflected by the titles and epithets which they heaped upon him, and which include almost everything that a Greek held sacred. In a dozen different names they call him king and lord. He is Zeus of the clan and of the ancestors, Zeus who guards the home, who minds the storehouse, the protector of suppliants, the god of hospitality to strangers, of the sanctity of the oath, the bringer of justice, guardian of the city – and there are countless others, too well known to need enumeration. Let us only note before we leave him that the Greeks carried the notion of a universal god considerably further than anyone had ever done before, and very nearly as far as anyone has carried it since. So firmly were his supremacy and universality established that his name came to be used by poets and philosophers almost as the name of God might be used by a Christian or that of Allah by a Moslem. Aeschylus felt no incongruity in applying it to the great moral power which was his conception of God, and in the second century AD, in the deeply philosophical writings of a Marcus Aurelius, we find that the sublime Stoic belief in the brotherhood of man can be fitly expressed by calling the world the City of Zeus.

W. K. C. Guthrie *The Greeks and their Gods*

After 1400 BC the leadership of the Aegean world passed to mainland Mycene; and the Mycenean pantheon presumably spread its influence as the Mycenean social and economic system penetrated widely from its mainland centres. The ensuing social conflict, and fusion of peoples and customs, was paralleled by increasing complexity in cults and in mythology, and in the composition and organization of the pantheon. The most dramatic form of this process was a struggle, never quite resolved, between the old concept of a mother goddess and the newer concept of a dominating male god, Zeus.

Under the monarchical leadership of Olympian Zeus, the gods and goddesses were gathered together in a single heavenly stronghold. Their dwelling-places, built by Hephaestus, surrounded the central palace of Zeus. Although the authority of the supreme male god had become fairly stable, it was not unchallenged. In fact Hera, wife of Zeus, was amongst those who intrigued against his authority.

This Homeric picture of the Olympian hierarchy is paralleled by the Homeric picture of earthly conditions. Even in the midst of war, Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek expedition to Troy, could claim only a loose kind of authority: his control was often disputed by his fellow-chieftains. This instability has its analogy in the inability of the Achaeans to establish a centralized, enduring Bronze Age economy similar to the older oriental type.

There is, too, a lack of uniformity in the Homeric accounts of the Olympian system. In two passages of the *Iliad* Zeus is living alone on Olympus. In one passage he hurls a thunderbolt, in the other he sends a storm. It is highly probable that Olympus itself was a kind of generic term for 'mountain'. However, in a well-known evocative passage of the *Odyssey*, the heavenly Olympus is described in a way that is more appropriate to the Minoan Fields of the Blest than to a lofty, mountainous seat of storms, rain and lightning.

The growth of the Olympian pantheon was a process of tribal federation which led to military kingship. The mortal prototype of the weather god who was lord of storms, rain, lightning and thunder, and reigned in a mountain fortress, was the Mycenean overlord. The companions of the god, with their differing functions, at first lived apart from him but eventually, although they kept their traditional functions, they went to live with the Olympian overlord in his stronghold and were subject to his will.

Dying God from Crete

The traditional function, or privileges, or spheres of influence of the gods were the outcome of heavenly tribal warfare. Legend tells how Zeus made a promise to his supporters before he went to war against the old order represented by Cronus and the Titans. He swore that if he won he would guarantee the rights they already had, and would apportion rights to those who had none; when the conflict was over he became the supreme overlord and bestowed the honours. The traditional province of Hephaestus, for instance, was fire; Atlas held up the skies; Apollo was concerned with music and dancing; Hades with lamentation; the nymphs cared for mortals in the time of their youth, and so on.

The Twelve Gods who were early united into a sort of official Olympian society were normally Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athene, Hephaestus and Hestia. There were sometimes modifications to the list, as when Dionysus replaced Hestia in the representation of the Twelve on the east frieze of the Parthenon in Athens.

Dionysus has a place of special importance in Greek religion, essentially popular and non-Olympian. However, the cults which he personified and which played such a major role in historical times, had their counterparts elsewhere in much earlier times. Explaining why the cult of Dionysus was conspicuously absent in Crete, M.P. Nilsson observed in *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*: 'The reason why Dionysus does not appear in Crete can only be that he was not needed there, the religious ideas of which he was the herald having already been applied to the Cretan Zeus.'

The copious amount of legendary material regarding the birth of Zeus in Crete emphasizes its pre-eminence compared with other birth-stories of Zeus. However, the very existence of such a remarkable birth-story, and the cults associated with it, inevitably meant that places other than Crete were also credited with being the site of Zeus's birth. These included Messenia where Zeus was reputed to have been reared by nymphs on Mount Ithome; Arcadia which, apart from Crete, made the strongest claims, with a legend that Cronus had swallowed the stone on Mount Thaumasius and that Zeus was born and reared on Mount Lycaeus; and Olympia, which was said to be Zeus's birthplace in a legend of the founding of the Olympic Games.

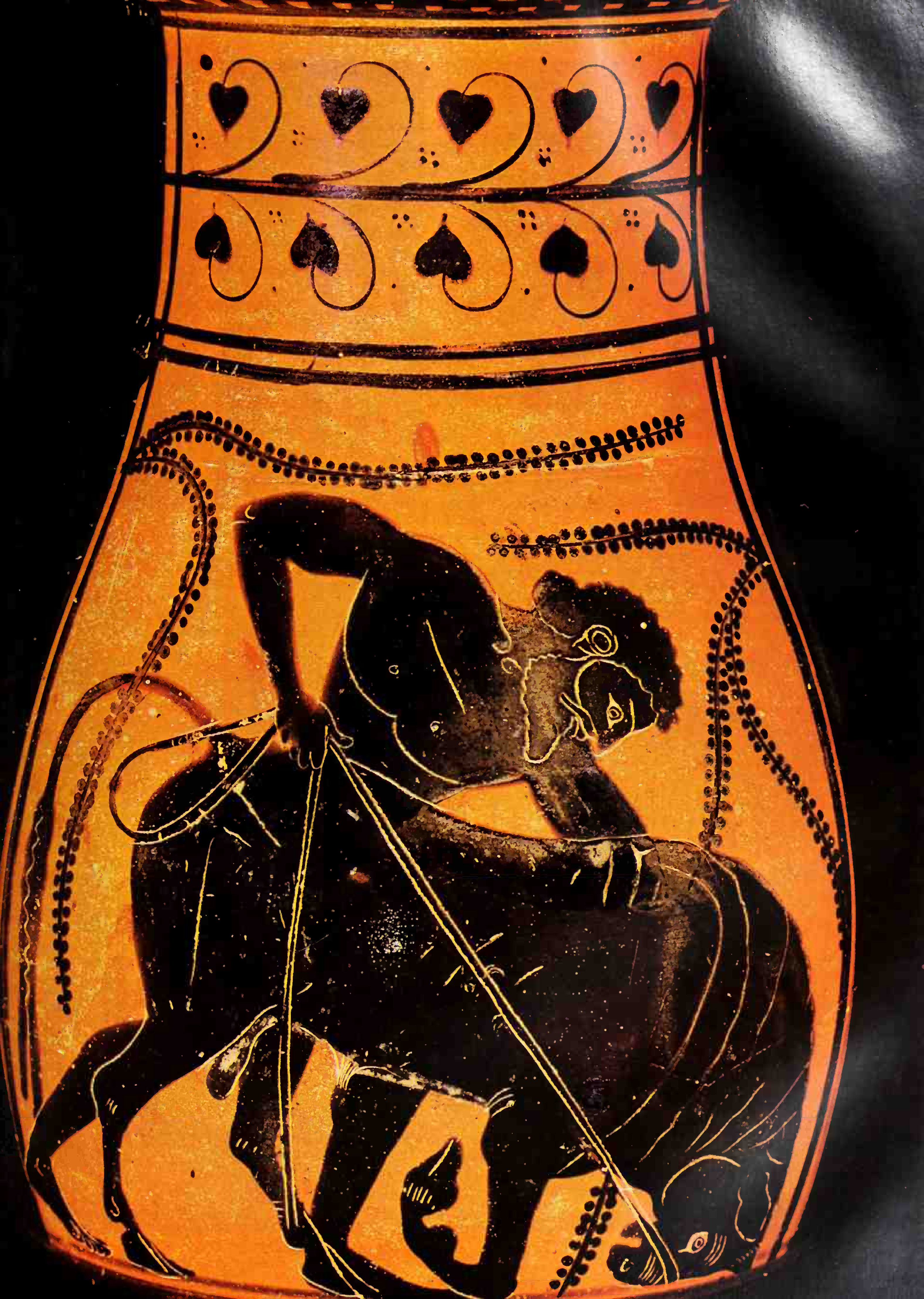
It was quite consistent that the dying god, Zeus of Crete, should not only have had his sacred marriage to Hera commemorated in an annual ceremony during which sacrifices were offered with traditional wedding rites but that his death also should have been mourned. This explains why the legend of Zeus's tomb, supposedly located at various places in Crete including Cnossus, Mount Ida and Mount Dicte, has endured from ancient to recent times.

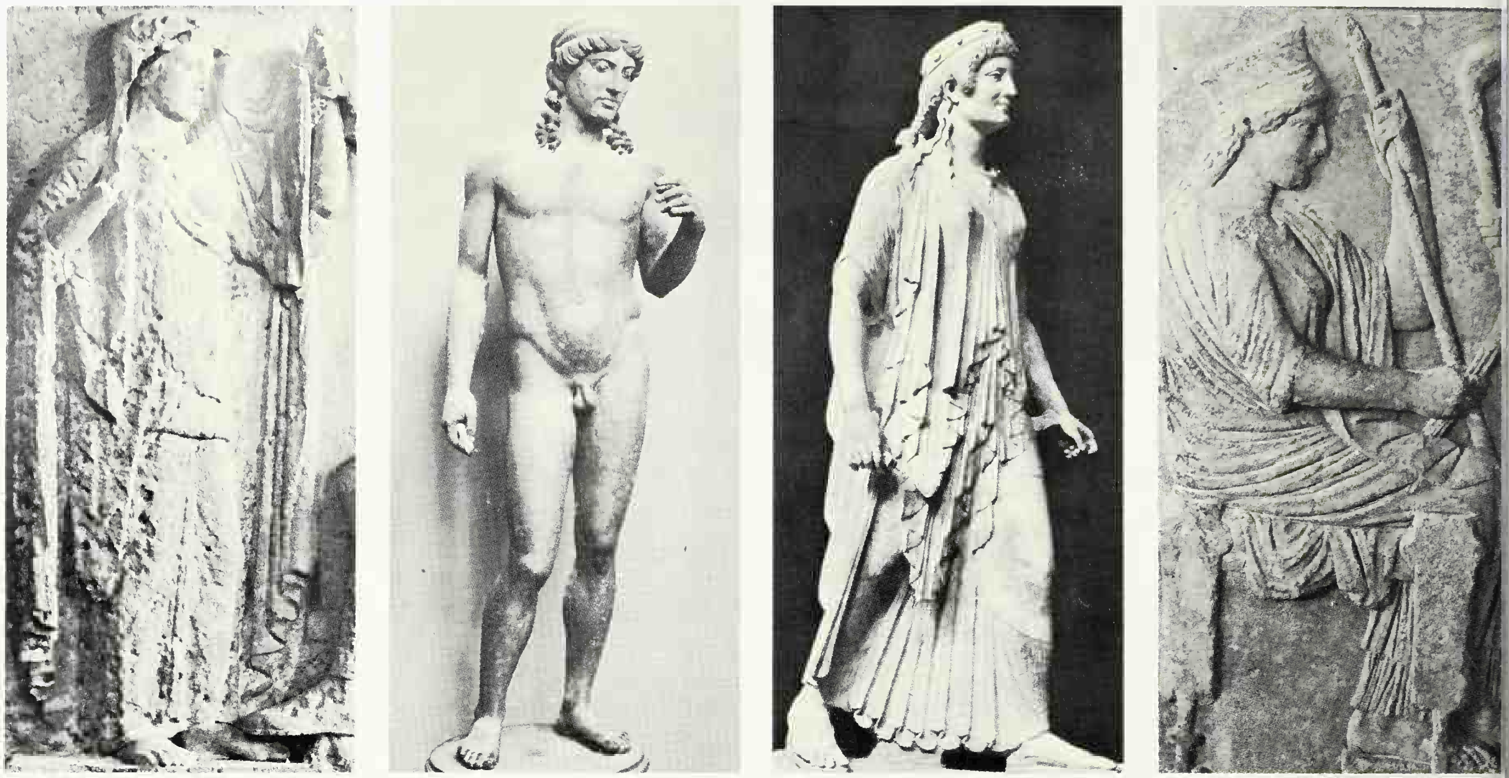
There are a number of versions of the inscription on this legendary tomb, which suggests that 'Zan', the old name for Zeus was certainly well known in Crete, and also that the cult of Cretan Zeus was involved with, if it did not actually develop from, an earlier cult of Minos. A common link was an annual festival celebrating a god like Adonis or Tammuz, at which this god was eaten in the form of a bull. The evidence for the tomb, relatively late though it may be indicates that Cretan Zeus was looked upon as a dying god, with the implication that he died annually and was born again.

Initiation, which may well have originated in the Bronze Age, continued to play a major part in various Greek cults and in socia life generally. The death and rebirth of an initiate tended to be dramatically represented, often with a contest and some kind of ordeal. It was not only the god, or his animal symbol, who continually died and was born again. A similar pattern persisted in the training of the youth of the Greek city-states in classical times.

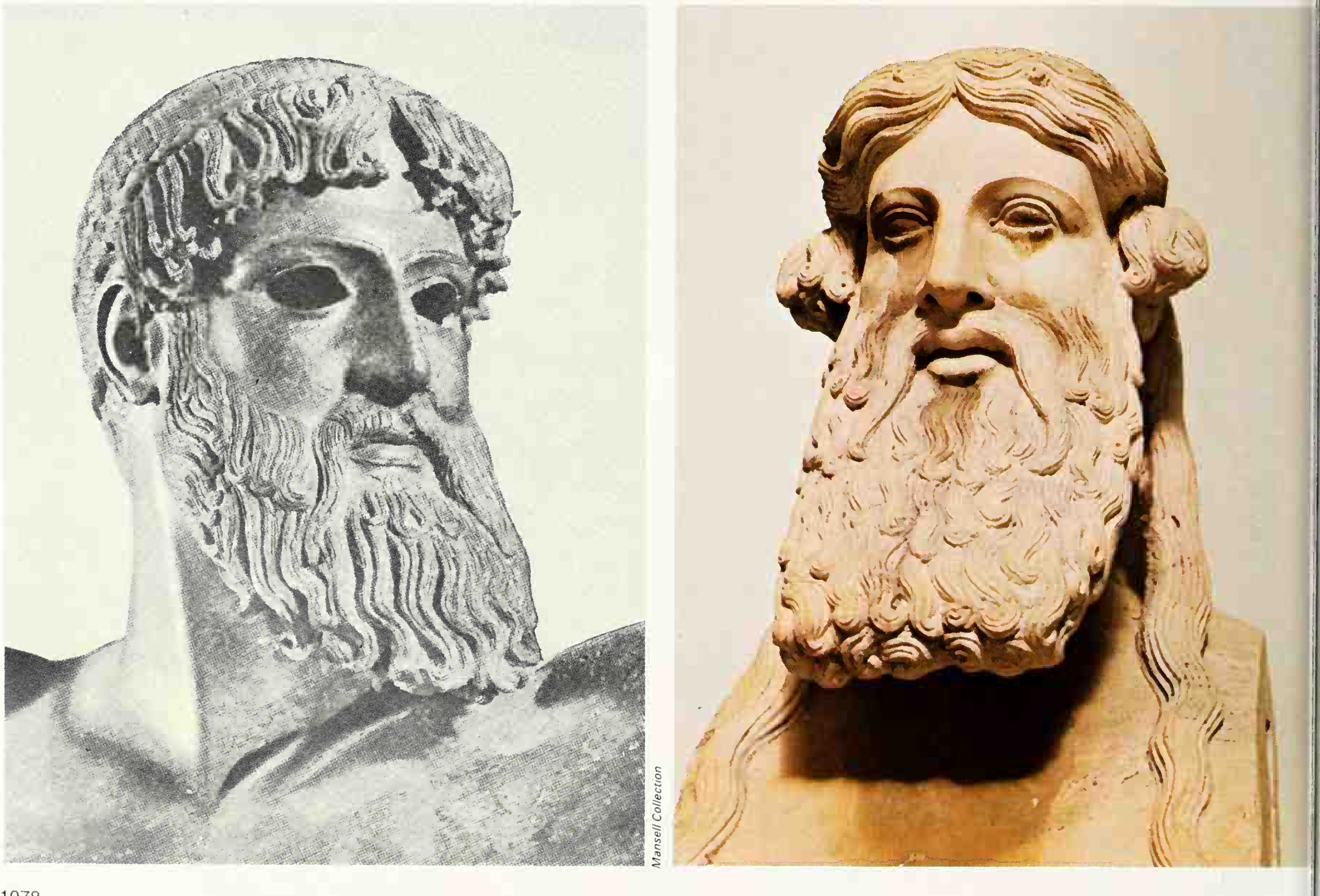
The late appearance and subordinate status of a male Minoan deity served to emphasize the over-riding importance of the Minoan goddess. In Neolithic times there seems to have been no concept of a male

The hero Hercules, renowned for his gigantic strength, captures the Cretan bull in the seventh of his 12 labours. The mainland Greeks 'captured the Cretan bull' in a sense when they conquered the rich and peacefu civilization of Crete





The Twelve Gods of Olympus, with their own functions or spheres of influence, lived with Zeus in his stronghold and sometimes challenged his authority. *Above, left to right* Demeter was concerned with agriculture and the fruits of the earth (relief at Eleusis). Apollo, god of music, prophecy and healing, and as god of oracles 'the ambiguous one', was identified with the sun and inspired much Greek art and literature (statue in the National Museum, Naples). Artemis, goddess of the chase and of wild animals, was probably descended from the Cretan Lady o Wild Beasts (statue in the National Museum, Naples). Hera was the wif of Zeus and presided over all phases of the life of women (relief in th National Museum, Palermo). *Below left* Poseidon, whose dominio was the sea: bronze statue, c 460 BC *Below right* Hermes, god o travellers and the messenger of Zeus, was also responsible for guidin souls on their way to the underworld



Mansell Collection

The Greek's Demeter, who was divine protectress of agriculture and the fruits of the earth, perpetuated the role of the old Minoan mother goddess

ivinity in human form. He emerged later, as secondary deity, but the tendency to raise im to a superior status was clear by the end f Minoan times. With the decline of the nother goddess, the bull became associated ith the Minoan kingship, which perhaps ad important functions in relation to the overning of the calendar. Hence the bull ecame a symbol of the sun, and both were ertility symbols. Bull-worship and snake- orship remained associated with traditions f the prehistoric Bronze Age kingship.

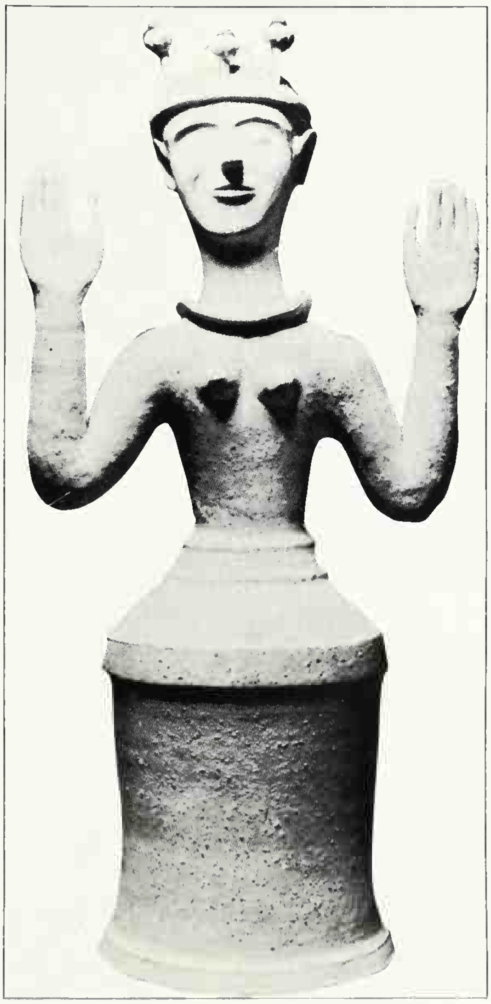
The Minoan goddess is a central feature f Minoan religion, just as the palace was central feature of Minoan social life. n surviving monuments and artefacts she shown in association with animals, birds nd snakes; with the sacred pillar and the acred tree; with poppies and with lilies; ith the sword and the double axe. She ppears to have been huntress and goddess f sports, she was armed and also presided ver ritual dances; she had male and female tendants, and she held sway over moun- ain, earth, sky and sea, over life and death. he was household goddess, vegetation oddess, Mother and also Maid.

There are many examples of figurines om Minoan Crete, including votive images om sanctuaries, cult idols from shrines, nd statuettes which have been recovered om graves and tombs. The various ttitudes assumed by these figurines, which nclude the 'gesture of benediction' familiar n portrayals of the mother goddess, some- mes recall the postures of a sacred dance. he sitting or squatting position of early pecimens could well represent the attitude ctually assumed for childbirth. Hence the iffering gestures depicted by later statu- ttes could also have been supposed to have ad a beneficial influence on childbirth and n the growth of crops.

As puppets, the images had clear asso- iations with birth and with death, account- g for their presence in graves and tombs. s votive offerings, they represented wor- hippers appealing for the protection of the oddess in sickness or childbirth, an initia- on, marriage or bereavement; or the tatuettes could represent the goddess her- elf. Figurines dating from the earliest times nward have been discovered in Greece, howing that the ancestral idols of magic did ot easily yield to the deities of religion.

By Minoan times the bull, the dove and the snake had already acquired special prominence. Large numbers of votive offerings included figurines of oxen, goats, rams, swine and dogs. There is no doubt that the birds that are so often portrayed in Minoan religious contexts, perched upon double axes, columns, trees or idols represent divine manifestations. In fact, the birds of the domestic shrines are not mere votive offerings but real representations of deity; and the idea of birds as manifest forms of the spirits of the dead was persistent in later Greek religion.

The mother goddess of Crete held sway over mountain and earth, sea and sky, life and death: figurine of the goddess, her hands in a gesture of blessing



Mansell Collection

The most conspicuous Minoan domestic cult was that of the snake, especially in connection with the so-called snake goddess. Snake cults are world-wide, and are associated with the belief that snakes are incarnations of the dead. They also signify immortality because they cast their skins and renew themselves, personifying the ability to be reborn. Both dreaded and revered, snakes became beneficent, guardians of the house. Snake-worship was common in later Greek religion and indeed plays a part in modern Greek folklore.

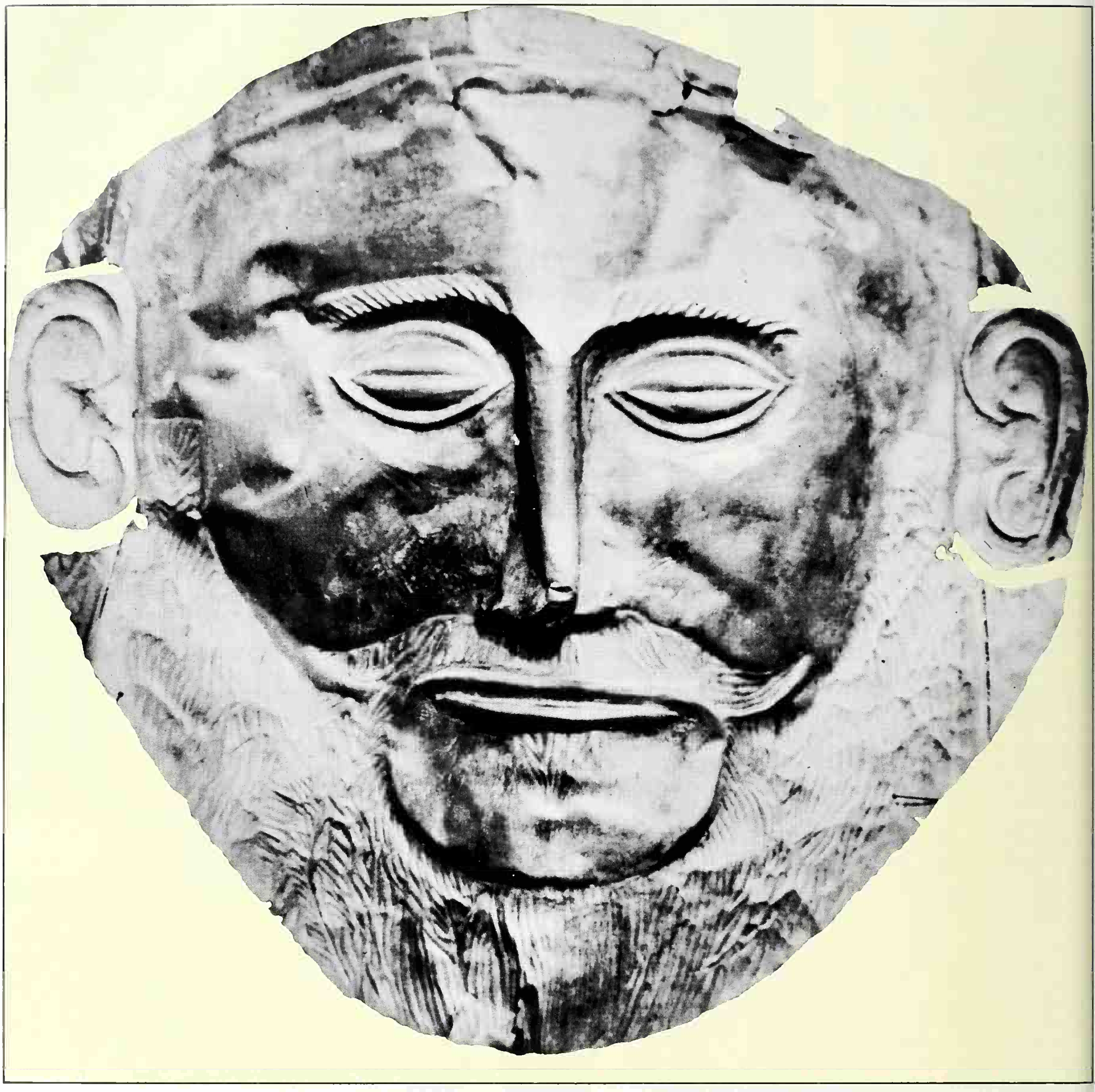
All these powerful traditions seem to have played their part in the formulation of the mother goddess as an abstract and unifying principle, both one and many. It was perhaps in the Cretan palaces of the Bronze Age that the Neolithic figurine developed most rapidly into a female deity in human form, still attended by magical and totemistic symbols, in the form of trees and stones, animals, birds and flowers. The most sacred Minoan flower was the lily.

Hero and God of Health

Some goddesses of the later conventional pantheon markedly perpetuate the role of the old Minoan mother goddess. Demeter was said to have reached Greece from Crete; she was regarded as divine protectress of agriculture and the fruits of the earth. The myth of Demeter and Persephone recalls the Minoan concept of the mother goddess as both Mother and Maid. The famous Eleusinian Mysteries performed at Eleusis near Athens (see ELEUSIS), were in their honour. These mysteries may have originated in the East, but there is little doubt that they were brought to Greece from Crete.

The cult of Apollo and his mother Leto originated in Asia Minor. Their association with Crete has long been recognized, together with evidence that the cult of this goddess survived more markedly in Crete than in mainland Greece, where her cults are few and of uncertain age. Other deities and semi-divine heroes were loosely connected with the official Greek pantheon and with traditional Greek mythology. They include Eros ('Love'), Selene ('the Moon'), Hercules, and Asclepius.

The hero of physicians, elevated to divine status, Asclepius had a cult and temple at Lebena in Crete in historical times (see HEALING GODS). The snake, his constant



The so-called mask of Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks in the siege of Troy according to Homer: gold funeral mask of a prince of Mycene, the great fortress-city of pre-classical Greece. The organization of the gods and goddesses portrayed in Homer reflects the social conditions of the Mycenean period

companion and symbol, indicates his association with earlier phases of religion, recalling the prominence of the snake cult in Minoan belief. He did not really become a god until the end of the 6th century BC; excavations at Epidaurus, the most famous centre of his cult, revealed that the buildings dedicated to him cannot be dated earlier. But the cult, with its combination of superstition, miracle cures and genuine medical lore, enjoyed an increasing respect in the Greek world in later antiquity, which has rightly been contrasted with the growth of scepticism towards the traditional Olympian hierarchy.

By the Christian era the worship of Asclepius had spread widely and was a potent force while other cults had lost ground. In fact, Asclepius was looked upon as the chief opponent of Christ in the late pagan period: he was firmly entrenched in his position as one of the great, and one of the most popular, ancient gods when the final struggle between Christianity and paganism ensued. The Christians did not deny that he possessed real power, just as they had to acknowledge the reality and strength of the other heathen deities. They admitted that he was able to heal but as with other gods and goddesses whom they opposed, they believed that Asclepius was weaker than their own Lord.

(See also CRETE; and articles on individual deities and heroes.)

R. F. WILLETTS

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s the colour of vegetation, green was prominent n spring celebrations throughout Europe; it is lso, traditionally, the colour of envy

GREEN

HE GREEN MAN of British inn signs ommemorates an important figure of the old pringtime festivities. In England he was alled Jack in the Green or Jack in the Bush. On May Day in 1894 at Lewisham ne Jack was a man encased in a tall frame-ork shaped like a bottle, covered with ivy eaves and crowned with paper roses. The Iay Queen and her maidens danced round im while he revolved solemnly on his axis. n 18th century London the black-faced himney-sweeps danced on May Day, led by Jack in the Green. He was hidden inside framework which might be as much as en feet high, to which green boughs of olly and ivy were fastened, with flowers and bbons at the top.

All over Europe, green as the colour of egetation, the reviving life of plants and rees, was prominent in the celebration of pring. The maypole was garlanded with reenery, and children paraded about with reen branches. In Britain May Day was onnected with Robin Hood, not unsuitably, nce that great outlaw lived in the green-ood and dressed his men in Lincoln green. ne May Day in the 16th century Henry VIII nd his courtiers rode a-Maying to Shooter's Iill, where they found 200 archers, dressed ll in green with green hoods. Their leader, ho was called Robin Hood, insisted that he king stay to watch them shoot. (See also OBIN HOOD.)

Green George

n parts of Russia and the Balkans the quivalent of Jack in the Green was Green eorge, also a man masquerading as a tree. ne custom on St George's Day (23 April) as to fell a tree, decorate it with flowers nd carry it in a procession led by Green eorge, who was covered from head to foot n branches of birch. He was ducked in a tream or a pond to make sure that enough ain would fall to keep the fields green in ummer. In Switzerland the Whitsuntide out was a boy enmeshed in leafy branches ho carried a green bough. He was ducked n the village well, which gave him the ight to sprinkle water on everyone else. n Germany the May King might be concealed n a wooden frame, with a bell inside it, overed with birch boughs and flowers. eople had to guess who was hidden inside. t a wrong guess the May King shook his ead, which made the bell ring, and the nsuccessful guesser had to pay a forfeit.

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer treated hese customs as relics of tree worship. It eems clear that the Green Man was the pirit of the reviving vegetation, immersed n water as imitative magic to ensure rain or the fields and crops. Many old European ustoms involving holly, ivy and other ever-reens mark, or look forward to, the renewal f life in the spring (see HOLLY AND IVY; AY DAY).

The evergreen plants which stay green all through the winter inspired the Christian symbolism of green as the colour of 'hope for eternal life', and the 'green pastures' are the eternal meadows of heaven. The connection with water, as the bringer of life, appears again in the story of the man who drank the water of life and promptly turned green, which crept into the legends of Alexander the Great (see ALEXANDER THE GREAT). In popular Mohammedan belief 'the green one' is Khidr or Khisr, who long ago drank from the Fountain of Life and has lived on ever since, travelling the seas and protecting sailors. Interestingly enough, he was identified with St George, who was himself connected with the Green George in eastern Europe.

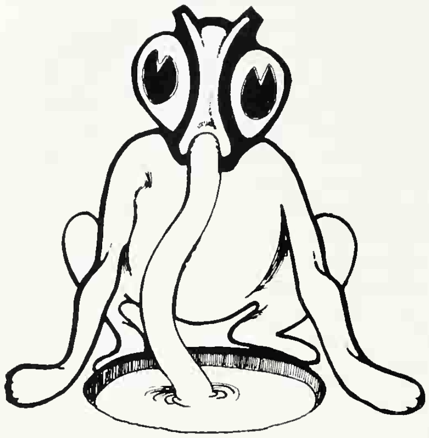
Green is also frequently worn by fairies and, for some unknown reason, it is the colour of envy. This seems to lie behind an old Scottish rule that if a girl was married before her older sisters, she gave them green stockings. In Fife knitted green garters were secretly fastened to the clothes of an older unmarried sister or brother of the bride, and in the west of England an elder sister should dance in green stockings at her younger sister's wedding.

But the prevailing symbolism of green is as the colour of the beauty and harmony of Nature. It does in fact seem to have a peaceful and soothing influence on people, and is often lavishly used in the decoration of hospitals, for this reason.

(See also COLOURS; CORRESPONDENCES.)

The Green Man of British inn signs originally represented the reviving life of vegetation in the spring. Covered from head to foot in green branches, he danced and capered at springtime festivities, and might be ducked in water to ensure rain

Chris Barker



Gremlin

Mischievous air spirit believed to cause mishaps to airplanes; the name is said to have been coined by a British bomber squadron in India, not long before the Second World War, by amalgamating Grimm's Fairy Tales with Fremlin's Elephant Ales; the gremlin has now largely disappeared from British and American airmen's lore.

JEAN GRENIER

THE BELIEF THAT a human being could transform himself into a wolf at will appears frequently in medieval European stories and indeed much later. Generally those accused of this offence were brought to justice, if they were not killed by terrified peasants. A typical case was that of Jean Grenier, a 13-year-old youth, who was tried in 1603 by the court of Bordeaux.

Neglected by his parents, the boy lived by begging and minding cattle, and it was the accusation of another child similarly employed which led to his arrest. The girl's story was that she had been attacked by a wolf-like beast and that afterwards she had realized that her attacker was Jean Grenier.

Even before his arrest Grenier had boasted of his exploits, claiming that he was able to become a wolf and that he had killed and eaten dogs. He even said that he had eaten a girl 'apart from her arms and legs'.

During his trial Grenier agreed with the statements of several peasants whose children had been attacked or eaten by a werewolf. He confessed to meeting a 'Gentleman of the Forest' who rode a black horse and had brought him a wolf's skin and given him a special cream which he rubbed on himself; and he told the court how, when he wore the skin, he was transformed into a wolf or any other animal he wished.

Jean was later described as bein rather small for his age with a vacan expression, haggard eyes, large fang-lik teeth and long dirty finger nails.

Although there was enough evidence t send the boy to the stake, the court wa presided over by an understanding an humane magistrate, who took into considera tion the age and situation of this 'stupi and ill-nourished child . . . whom wicke seduction and despair had corrupted . . . He preferred, he said, 'to save a soul for Go rather than consider it lost'.

The verdict was that Jean Grenie should be confined to a Bordeaux convent fo the rest of his life, where he died 'a goo Christian', some seven years after his trial

Generations of children have been fascinated by the folktales of the Grimm brothers, who were not only distinguished linguistic scholars but also the founders of scientific folklore

GRIMM

ENTHUSIASTIC COLLECTORS and antiquarians, with a deep and lasting interest in folklore and mythology, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are best known today for their collaboration on *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, popularly known as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. In fact, they also published many other works, separately and in collaboration.

The combination of rare talent and early recognition of their merits and the extent of their contribution to scholarship, made them not only the most distinguished scholars of the German Romantic period, but also favoured their reputation abroad. Both Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) carried out most of their work together after obtaining law degrees from the University of Marburg. Jacob subsequently visited Paris where he was appointed first librarian, then auditor to Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia. Later he became secretary of the legation to the minister for Hesse at Paris and the Congress of Vienna. Wilhelm was appointed librarian at Kassel, where Jacob joined him in 1816.

In [illegible] they both became members of the staff of Göttingen University, as professor and librarian respectively; but Jacob supported the protest of seven professors against the *coup d'état* of the elector of Hanover, and was exiled in 1837. In 1838 both brothers moved to Kassel, and in 1841 they were given chairs at the University of Berlin where, by appointment of Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, they were elected to the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

Of the two, Jacob was the grammarian and historian, specializing in the science of language, and Wilhelm was primarily the literary scholar. Jacob contributed greatly to the advance of linguistic studies and published a number of important books on these and other related subjects; in collaboration with Wilhelm he produced an inventory of the entire German language. His *Deutsche Mythologie* was published in 1835. Wilhelm's principal independent work is the *Deutsche Heldensage* (1829), which he wrote as a result of his studies of German heroic myths. These he placed historically between history and mythology.

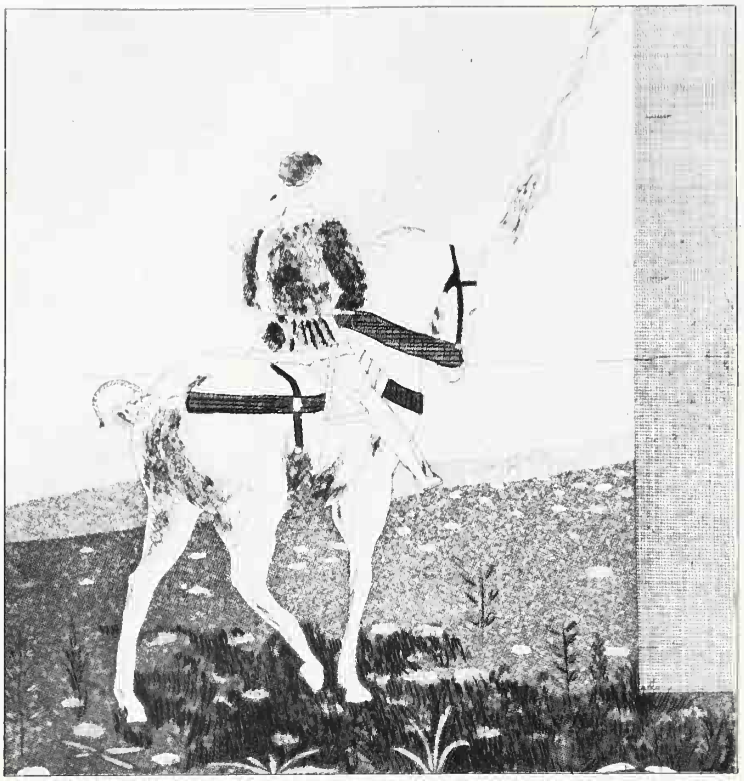
From the very beginning of their researches the brothers Grimm devoted much time to seeking out and deciphering medieval manuscripts, and to collecting and studying the so-called Folk Books of the 16th century. Their aim was to discover all sources of German antiquities which might possibly throw light on the origin and connection between heroic sagas, mythology and folktales. Gradually this became their chief occupation and provided the impetus for all their researches. Either separately or together, they brought out their editions of various German medieval texts, and of the *Edda* (1815), a major source o information about early Scandinavian belief and culture. They also interested themselve in the manner in which medieval songs wer performed.

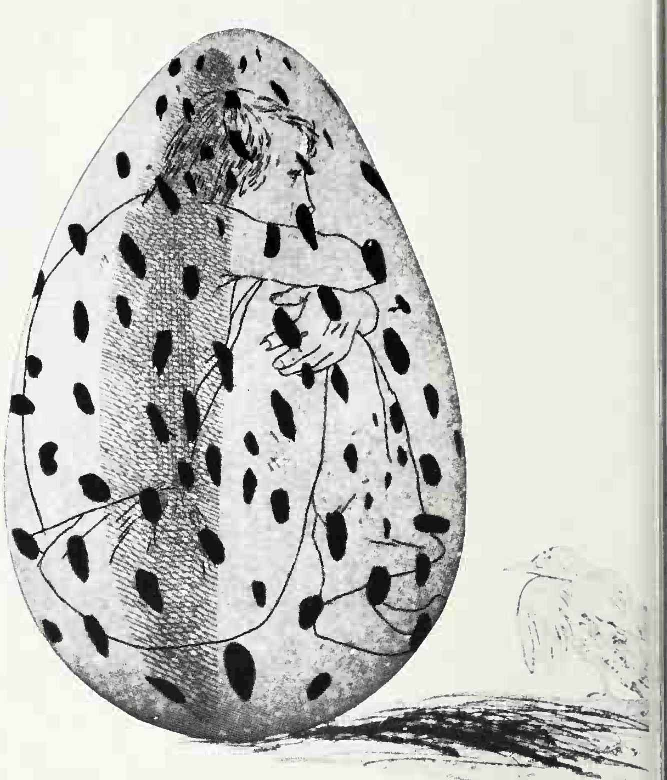
A stimulus and great encouragement t their collecting of tales had been thei aquaintance with the so-called Heidelber group of Romanticists, especially with th writers Clemens Brentano and Joachim vo Arnim, who at this time were collecting fol songs, legends and fairy tales. Encouraged b the success of their collected folk songs *De Knaben Wunderhorn* published in 1805 the Grimm brothers also began to collec tales with a view to publishing them. In thi they showed a scholarly regard for th sources, and respect for the creation of th people that was unusual at this time.

The tales that were known and publishe before the brothers' collection in 1811 wer not folktales as the term is understoo today. They were mostly satirical, didacti or moralistic stories, often told with supercilious contempt; or they had bee neglected by scholars and the public alike or treated at best as mere curiosities. Partl as a reaction to this unjustified attitude t the creations of the common people, an

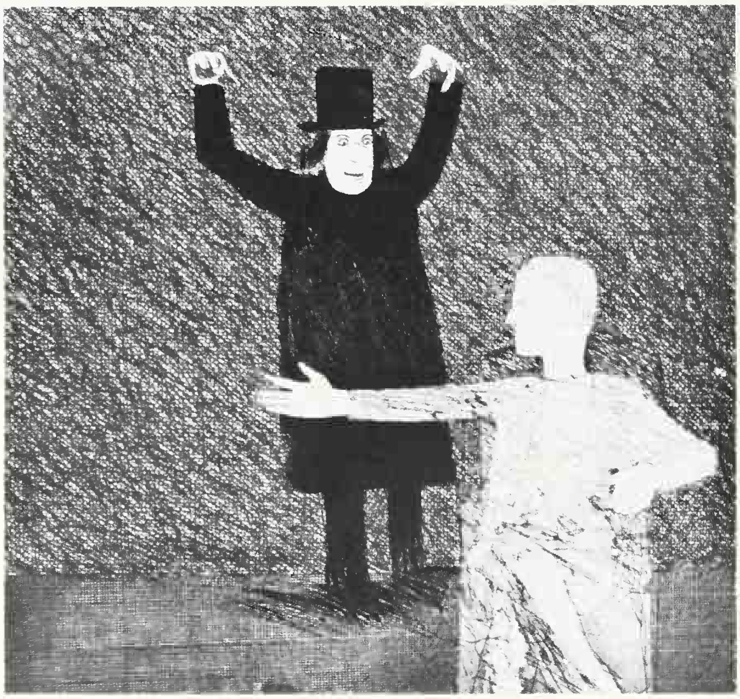
Belief in magic and miracles pervades th folktales collected by the Grimm brothers in 'The Jew in the Bush', a dwarf gives th hero a fiddle that sets everyone who hears i dancing: illustration by Arthur Rackham t *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 1900. In the Victori & Albert Museum

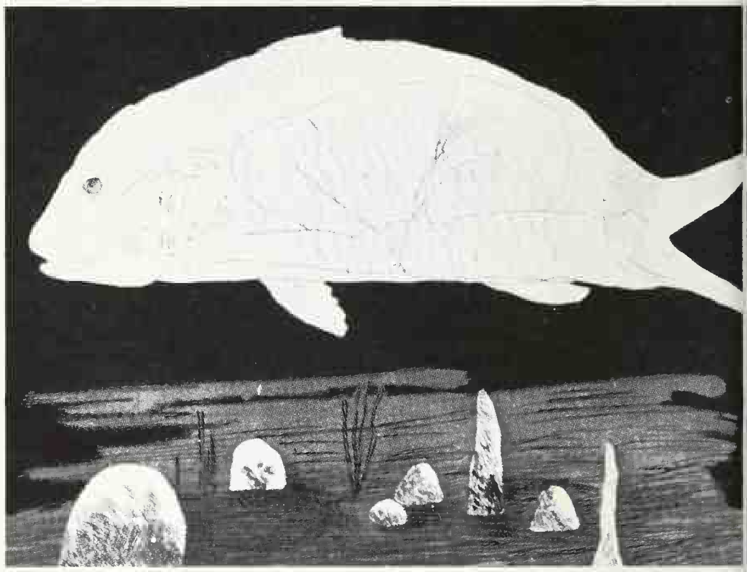
Grimms' Fairy Tales





The stories in *Grimm's Fairy Tales* have been interpreted as archetypal dreams; the life force animates all levels of existence, and the hero has the unique task of mediating between them. He liberates enchanted beings, and is transformed and perfected in the course of his travels: a selection of David Hockney's illustrations to the folktales





Petersburg Press

partly inspired by a wave of nationalistic feeling, the brothers' own treatment of the material was to see it as the source of popular beliefs and wisdom.

The idea of the unity of the nation, a new ideology that arose as a result of the Napoleonic armies having overrun Europe, was a matter very close to the hearts of both brothers. They were convinced that they could find in the past material that would lead to the answers that were needed in the present. For this reason they both tended to idealize the past, as is evident in Jacob's *Deutsche Mythologie* which was written from an idealistic conviction that the time of German antiquity was a time of freedom, a kind of Golden Age. The historical view presented in this work is that the pagan period of the Germans was followed by the strict and rigid Middle Ages which led to a period of despotic, absolute government.

In *Deutsche Mythologie* Jacob substituted deductive reasoning, partially based on his own ideas of a somewhat glorified Germanic past, for scientific observation. As in most countries where Christianity superseded the pagan religions, there are few reliable records of early times, and the data cannot always be established with certainty. Jacob therefore sought to obtain supplementary material for his thesis wherever it might be found and with this aim in view he used the collection of tales that had grown up over the years; he exploited the material he found in them for his *Deutsche Mythologie*, and supplemented the German data with material from Nordic countries for the same reason. He made comparisons with Hellenic, Slavonic, Celtic, Ugric and Oriental material. Consequently it is not really possible to extract from his account of Germanic mythology a factual history of Germanic religion.

Jacob presented the pagan religion of the Germans as an animistic Nature religion characterized by an abundance of spirits, good and evil, which are part of Nature, such as giants and gnomes. The gods have human characteristics and are similar to man in that they display his virtues and weaknesses. The pantheon of gods is engaged in a constant struggle with the dark demons and giants, but their magical powers combined with the assistance of wise nomes may keep the giants, the Midgard nake and the Fenris wolf in check. But bove them is the relentless power of Fate vhich turns against them with the murder f Balder. The central theme of the old Germanic myths is the struggle of the divine ods against the powers of darkness that vant to destroy Valhalla, their home. Only few gods survive, but there is another nyth which speaks of a resurrection of the ld destroyed world. It mentions the coming f a new and better world in which the divine owers triumph over the demons of darkness see GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY).

The publication, between 1812 and 814, of the three volumes of the *Kinder-nd Hausmärchen*, familiar to English eaders as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, was erhaps the most outstanding single event n their career as scholars. This work epresents the most universally known spect of their work and was to have the nost lasting international influence. From the oint of view of scholarship and the developnent of the study of folklore as a science, neir collection proved to be the most nportant of all collections of folktales. The tories enjoyed immediate success. They vere available in their English translation rom 1823, and gained immense popularity nroughout the English-speaking world, vhile their effect in scholarly circles was to ransform attitudes towards creations of ne common people. The folklorist's evoluon from antiquarian and amateur collector nd enthusiast dates from this event.

The Grimm brothers spent 13 years ollecting their stories. The story-tellers vere mainly simple folk from farms and illages, but they also received many stories rom friends. The brothers searched for naterial everywhere, and were eager to nclude any story they could find in their ollection, even if it came from literary ources. Because earlier collectors had nanipulated the folk material, and had ndeavoured to make it acceptable reading or the sophisticated, the Grimms were oncerned that the stories should be printed n the idiom in which they had been related.

A little earlier, before the brothers ublished their tales, the German Romantic oet Novalis had pronounced the folktale to e the primary and highest creation of man. The brothers told how they endeavoured o preserve the tales in the way they had ound them: 'Our first aim in collecting hese stories has been exactness and truth. Ve have added nothing of our own, have mbellished no incident or feature of the tory, but have given its substance as we urselves received it . . . Whenever we found hat varying stories completed each other, nd that no contradictory parts had to be ut out before they could be joined together, ve have given them as one, but when they iffered, we have given the preference to nat which was the better, and have kept ne other for the notes.'

Although both brothers agreed that tales hould not be merged, they nevertheless ombined them, added material from other ales, or left out recurring episodes. Vilhelm was responsible for the greater part f the work on the tales; he gave them their literary form. Gradually he began to work on them alone, and Jacob later used the material for his *Deutsche Mythologie*. Wilhelm aimed to keep the sentence construction simple and he took special care to retain the imagery, and some of the folk phrases, which gave the tales their freshness. He therefore kept to the repetitions which usually occur in a threefold sequence, and the stylistic formulas that are repeated between the episodes relating the action. But in spite of the attempt to preserve much of the folk-style and the idiom, the version of the tales available to the public is the product of men of great literary talent.

Fragments of Myths

For their material the Grimms were greatly indebted to their principal story-teller Katharina Viehmann (1755–1815) who was in her middle fifties when they met her. In the preface to the first edition of the second volume of the *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* Wilhelm describes her as having 'a strong and pleasant face and a clear sharp look in her eyes; in her youth she must have been beautiful. She retains fast in mind these old sagas – which talent, as she says, is not granted to everyone; for there be many that cannot keep in their heads anything at all. She recounts her stories thoughtfully, accurately, with uncommon vividness and evident delight . . .'

The brothers published a volume of commentary and a comparative study of the tales in 1822. More ideas on their content and significance may also be found in Wilhelm's essay in the second edition of tales in 1819. His main ideas on the content and meaning of the tales were that those stories which most resemble each other were undoubtedly derived from a common Indo-European ancestry. He was convinced, as was his brother, that the tales were fragments of old myths and heroic tales. He expresses a similar idea in the *Kleinere Schriften* (Minor Works). 'All tales have this in common that they express ancient beliefs which are reflected in their imagery, and embody supra-sensual phenomena.' His conviction that conditions existed which were so natural and basic that the tales could appear everywhere, and that peoples borrowed folklore materials from one another, was later taken up and developed further by a number of scholars.

The brothers Grimm did not retell the tales exactly as they had heard them. On the contrary, they prepared them very carefully, simplifying or embellishing them according to their poetic taste and to make them suitable for children; they chose their material from among the narratives that seemed to them to be poetically most striking, and in their choice they were not independent of the taste of their time. But their version of the tales is still universally read today, proving that their work has not dated in any way. Jacob would have preferred to have had the tales published in their folk-idiom but their widespread popularity is chiefly due to Wilhelm's talent in giving them their literary form.

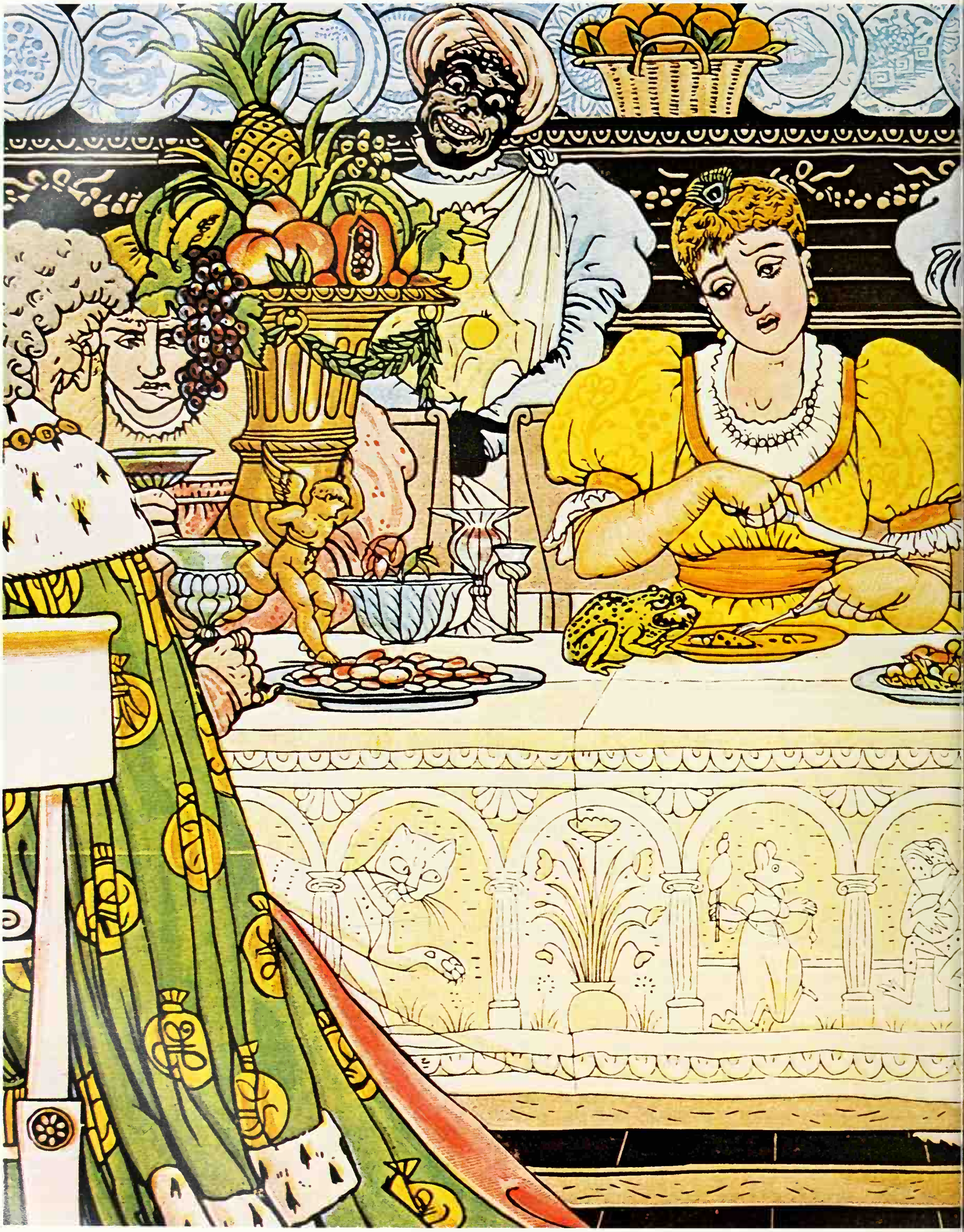
Subsequent collecting of folktales revealed that their plots and themes were largely identical with those in the stories and myths of other peoples, suggesting that folktales and myths were once one. In the tales folk-belief and the fanciful came to dominate over the profound *Weltanschauung*, or philosophy of life, which is embodied in them. In their collection the Grimms included literary tales that were recorded in the 16th century, some stories translated from Latin, sagas, legends, riddles, incantations, games, rhymes and anecdotes in keeping with the diverse character of folk art.

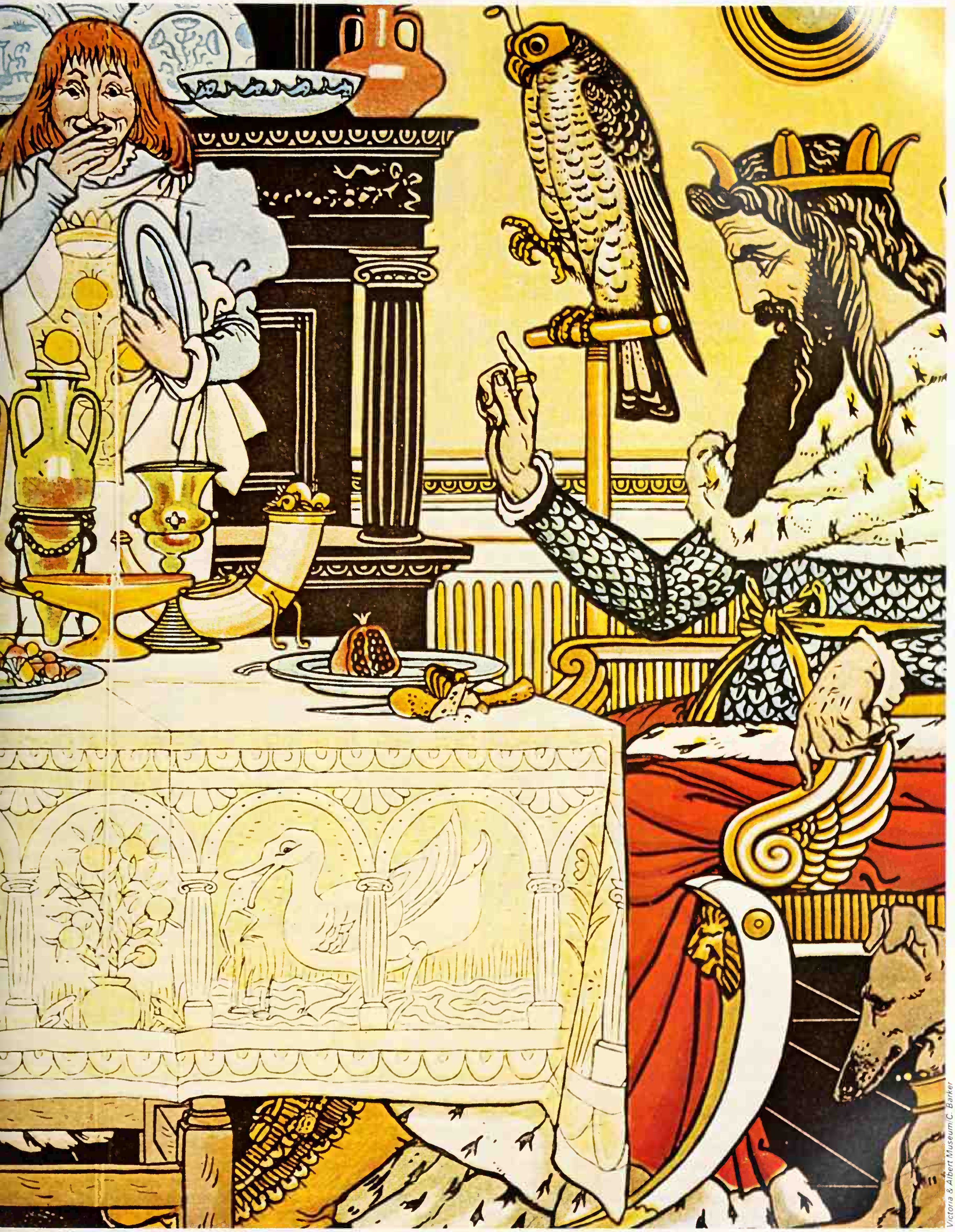
In this way their collection is similar to the story books of the East. Many of the folktale elements can be found in surviving written sources, such as the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* or the Egyptian tales. Similar or identical features that reflect the unity of the oral tradition and mythology may also be found in the narratives of ancient India, the Old Testament, the epics of Homer, the oriental collection of *A Thousand and One Nights*, in Germanic mythology or in the *Edda*.

Many of the Grimm brothers' tales embody a perennial philosophy shown in the stories which portray the hero's journey in search of the Elixir of Life, in the form of the water of life or the princess of the distant kingdom. These he obtains only after many obstacles have been overcome which is synonymous with having proved himself to be the true hero. Christian elements have found their way into the tales which feature God, Christ or the Devil as actors involved in the fate of man. Pre-Christian figures such as giants and gnomes, once part of pagan mythology, appear and so do magicians and witches. The principal figures such as kings, princesses and artisans are generally borrowed from the medieval social scene. Animals in the role of helpers or enemies abound, while transformation from man to animal, from plant to mineral, or the other way round, is a central theme. The life-force, as envisaged in the tales, is all-pervading and animates all levels of existence. It is the unique deed of the hero to mediate between these levels, to liberate enchanted beings, to transform and perfect himself in the process of his travels and to return to the world with gifts to bestow on his fellow men.

The belief in magic and miracles is a distinctive feature of the tales. There are countless examples of transformation through imitative and sympathetic magic, or through pronouncing a wish or speaking a thought in the form of a magic formula, which results in instantaneous action. This folktale magic is characteristic of the philosophy that any aspect of the whole may fulfil the function of the whole. For instance, the ring given by the supernatural helper to the hero carries his qualities and helps the hero in a difficult situation. The themes of the power of love that can break the spell that binds and imprisons the heroine, of wakefulness in face of danger and in relation to the execution of a task, and of the disguised hero under the mask of a fool are basic folktale motifs.

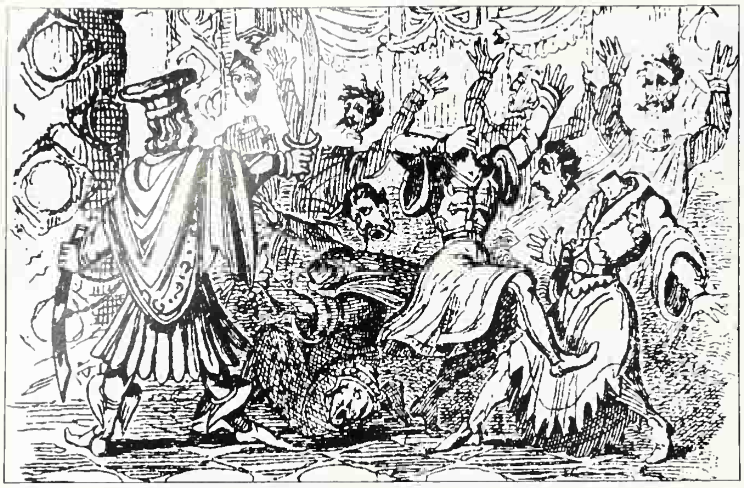
Characteristics of all types of folk art may be found in the folktales edited by the brothers Grimm; they are a mixture of the

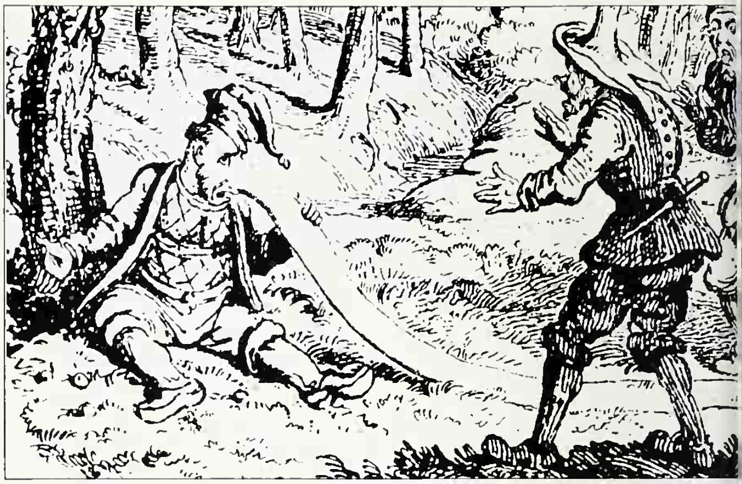




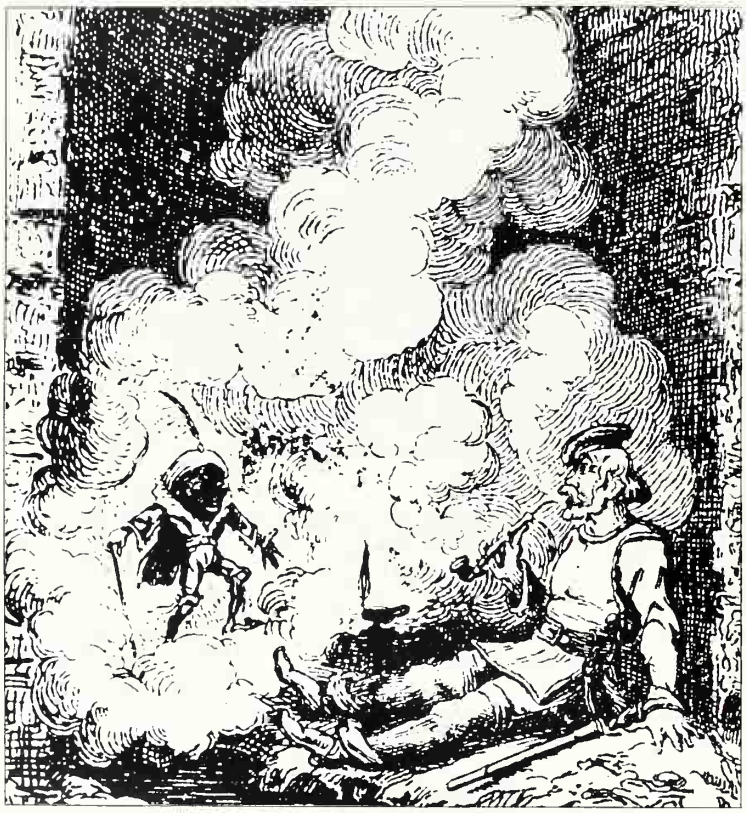
Victoria & Albert Museum/C. Barker

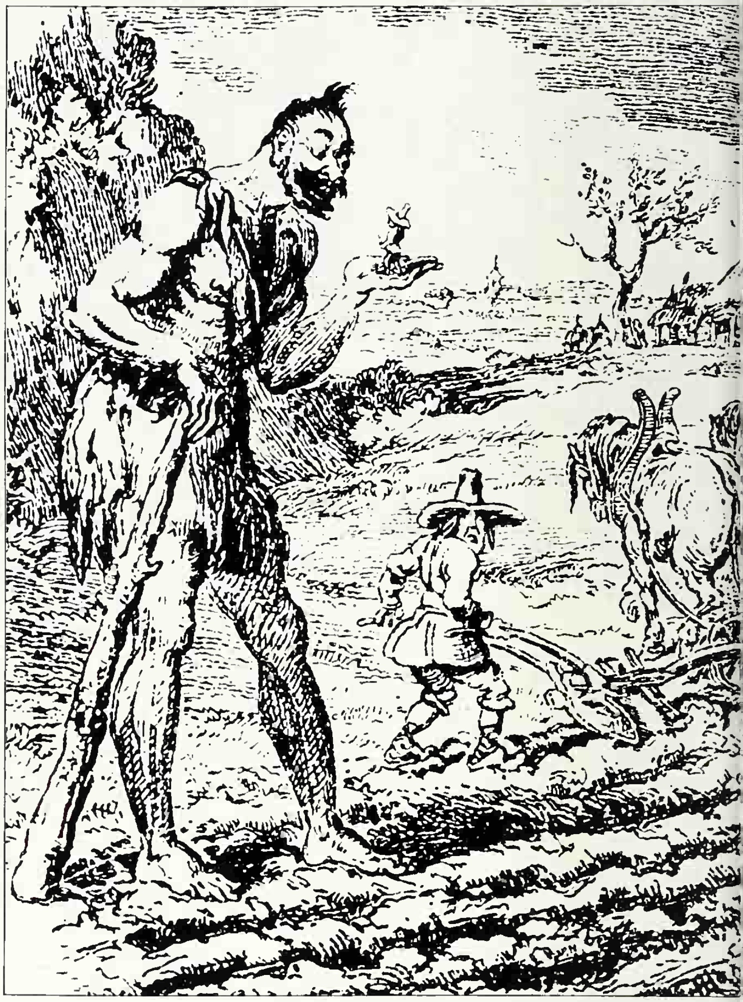
Illustration to 'The Frog Prince', by Walter Crane, c 1870: transformation from man to animal, or the other way round, is a central theme in the tales





Magical possessions, such as the sword that cuts off heads when its owner cries 'Heads off!' *(above)* and the blue light with which a soldier summons his supernatural servant *(below)* abound in the folktales, as do beings like the giant in 'The Young Giant and the Tailor' *(below right)* and the dwarf who helps a soldier whose nose grows enormously long *(above right)* when he eats a magical apple: illustrations by Cruikshank





religious and the profane, of 'high seriousness' and burlesque. Novel and ancient features have been assimilated in the course of their long existence; but in spite of all these diverse elements the tales have retained a fundamental unity of theme, structure and style, transcending any given period of time by embodying the timeless qualities expressed in the overall theme of the search for 'paradise lost'.

The folktale as an artistic creation is a mixture of the most diverse elements. It contains survivals of an ancient view of the world based on a fundamental dualism, separating it into sacred and profane, upper and lower, good and evil: all folktale figures are exponents of one force or the other united through the hero's deeds. The tales mirror beliefs in the supernatural and in magical practices, they embody ethical principles and display a belief in survival beyond death. They incorporate dream-motifs, they attempt to resolve the fear of death, the overcoming of which is the central aspect of the hero's battles. All these elements are united and given form through the fanciful imaginations of the bearers of tradition.

It is not possible to assess in detail the influence exerted by the tales in the field of scholarship. Scholars set out to find the 'archetype' or original story which gave rise to all others, and attempted to trace its evolution, its place of origin, its significance in the religious, historical and social life of a given people. More recently the tales have been interpreted as projections of man's psychological structure, as 'archetypal' dreams and so on. All the many and varied interpretations arose from a realization that these stories often embody a race's entire heritage, and from an attempt to elucidate the universal similarity of themes, and the stories' perennial relevance to man. No doubt, the brothers Grimm would have been delighted to see the extent to which their work has initiated collecting, editing and classifying of folktales all over the world.

M. G. WOSIEN

FURTHER READING: R. Michaelis-Jena, *The Brothers Grimm* (Routledge, 1970) and *New Tales from Grimm* (Chambers, 1960); J. Stern, *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Routledge, 1948).

GRIMOIRE

N ATMOSPHERE of Christian piety is erhaps the most surprising quality of the rimoires, the textbooks of the European radition of magic. They contain instructions or summoning up spirits or demons, onstantly calling on God for assistance, nd they give directions for making powerful alismans and performing other magical perations. Most of them date from the 6th to the 18th centuries, though they reserve older material.

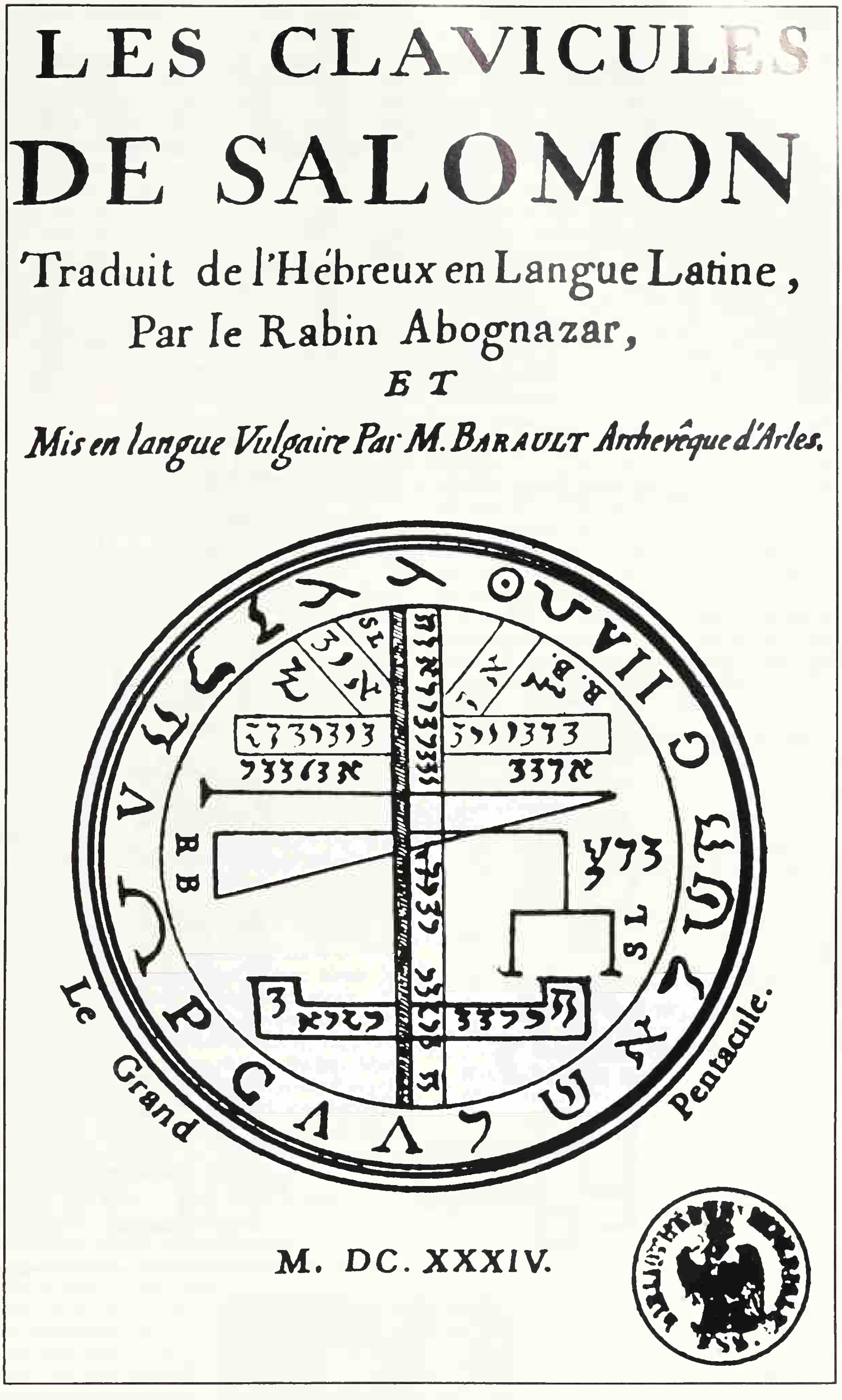
'Grimoire' is basically the same word as grammar' (and 'gramarye' is an old term or magic and enchantment) and the nplication that language is supremely nportant in magic is fully born out by the rimoires themselves. The most influential f them is the celebrated *Key of Solomon*, n which many of the others are based. trongly influenced by cabalistic and strological magic, the *Key* sets out the ngthy preliminaries, the choosing of a uitable time and place, the weapons, robes nd 'pentacles' or diagrams which the agician will need, the drawing of the magic rcle, the incantations for summoning pirits and for compelling their obedience. s usual in the grimoires, the processes are omplicated, elaborate and difficult. E. M. utler commented that they 'read like the orst sort of obstacle race' and 'are certainly alculated to deal the death-blow to any otions harboured by intending practitioners hat magic is a short cut to their desires.'

nfernal Devices

rinted copies of the *Key* are extremely are (the edition which MacGregor Mathers ublished in 1889 is heavily expurgated) but exists in numerous manuscripts in various nguages. Most of these date from the 16th entury or later but a Greek version in the ritish Museum may date from the 12th or 3th century. Solomon enjoyed a great gendary reputation as a powerful magician nd a worshipper of strange gods, and as far ack as the 1st century AD the Jewish istorian Josephus referred to a book of cantations for conjuring up demons, upposedly written by Solomon. The *Testa-ent of Solomon* (not the same as the *Key*) ating from c 100 to 400 AD, lists the names nd powers of demons which Solomon had ubdued with his magic ring. In the 13th entury Roger Bacon, himself a reputed agician, knew of magical works attributed Solomon and c 1350 *Le Livre de Salomon*, ontaining methods of evoking demons, was urned by order of Pope Innocent VI.

The key of the title is the instrument hich unlocks the doors of hidden power and isdom, a symbolism strengthened by the ords of Jesus to St Peter which magicians ook as a kind of warrant or charter. 'I will ve you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, nd whatever you bind on earth shall be ound in heaven . . .' (Matthew 16.19).

Also attributed to Solomon is the *Lemege-on* or *Lesser Key of Solomon*, divided into our sections and dating from the 16th entury or earlier. The first section lists 72 hief demons, with their names and powers,

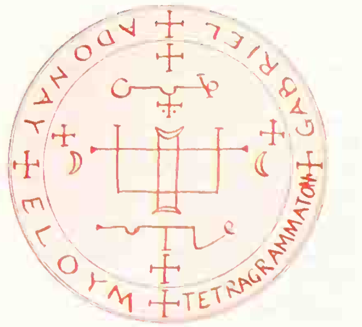


LES CLAVICULES
DE SALOMON
Traduit de l'Hébreux en Langue Latine,
Par le Rabin Abognazar,
ET
Mis en langue Vulgaire Par M. Barault Archevêque d'Arles.

Le Grand Pentacule.

M. DC. XXXIV.

Above Frontispiece of a 17th century version of the *Key of Solomon*. The most influential grimoire, the *Key* is strongly influenced by astrological and cabalistic magic. It sets out the preparations that must be made in order to summon spirits and compel their obedience, advice on choosing a suitable time and place for the ceremony, what kind of weapons, robes and pentacles are necessary, and instructions on drawing a magic circle **Right** Sigil or linear representation of the archangel Gabriel; 'He is to be invoked on a Thursday before daybreak. His power is very Great and he can do you great good, in which he will instruct you': from the *Grimoire of Armadel*, translated by MacGregor Mathers



Gerald Yorke Collection/Michael Holford

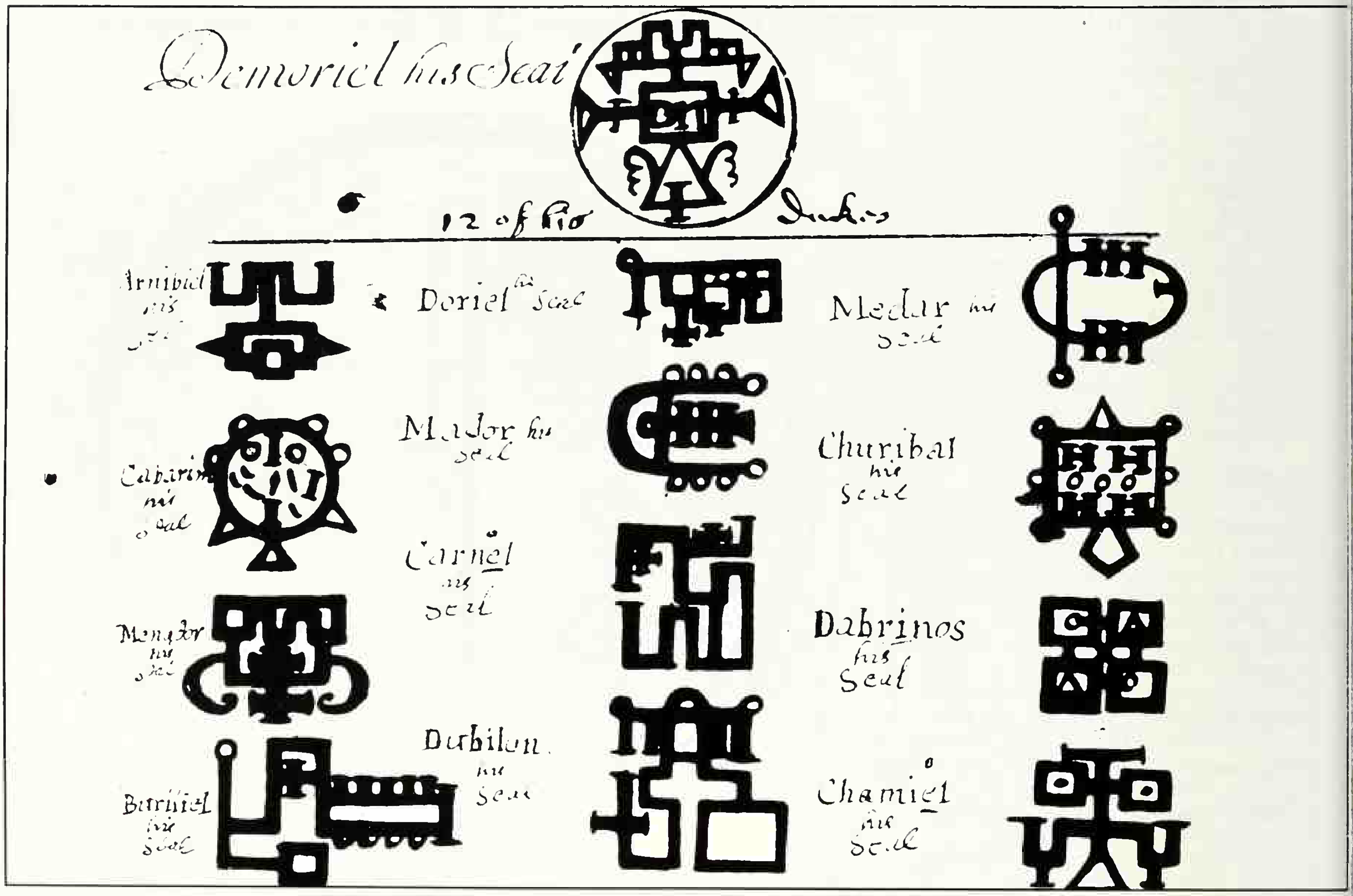
and the directions for summoning them.

Three famous French grimoires were based on the *Key* and the *Lemegeton*. The *Grand Grimoire* first printed in the 17th century, contains 'the Infernal Devices of the Great Agrippa for the Discovery of all Hidden Treasures and the Subjugation of every Denomination of Spirits, together with an Abridgement of all the Magical Arts.' Also known as the *Red Dragon*, it explains how to make a pact with the Devil and how to use 'the dreadful Blasting Rod, which causes the spirits to tremble.' *True Black Magic* or 'The Secret of Secrets', published at Rome in 1750, includes a collection of magical symbols and talismans. The *Grimorium Verum* also belongs to the 18th century though characteristically claiming to have been published by Alibeck the Egyptian at Memphis in 1517.

The French *Grimoire of Honorius the Great* probably dates from the late 16th century and is the most laborious and most paradoxically Christian of all. Its array of prayers, psalms and pious sayings of Mass, harnessed to the calling up of the Devil, have given it a particularly black reputation.

Among many other grimoires are the *Arbatel of Magic*, allegedly published at Basle in 1575 and mainly concerned with the summoning of the seven Olympic Spirits which rule the planets. Typically, its aims range from acquiring the supreme knowledge of God to making money and prolonging life. The Fourth Book, added t Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* but probabl not written by him, provides methods o invoking the planetary spirits. The *Heptameron, or Magical Elements* is a sequel to the Fourth Book and gives procedures for summoning the Spirits of the Air and for controlling supernatural beings which will find hidden treasures, cause wars and hatred, nose out secrets, open locked doors and procure the love of women.

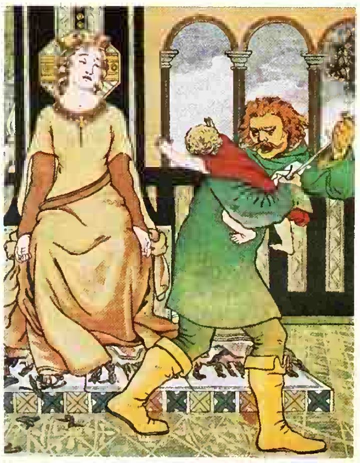
FURTHER READING: A. E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970); Idries Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970).



The seal of Demoriel, ruler of the North, from the *Key of Solomon*; below are the seals of 12 of the spirits who serve him

Griselda

Symbol of patience, heroine of a popular medieval story; the beautiful daughter of a peasant, she married a nobleman who subjected her to cruel tests of her love; the message of the story was the duty of uncomplaining acceptance of the will of God; the cruel husband may originally himself have been a supernatural being; the story is told in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and in the Clerk's Tale in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.



Grove

Sacred groves of trees have played an important part in the religions of many societies, including those of the Semitic peoples of the Near and Middle East, the Greeks and Romans, and the early Germanic tribes: trees have been widely worshipped for their size and strength, their periodic renewal of foliage, their vertical growth and flow of sap, their mysterious rustling in the wind.
See TREES.

Guardian Spirits

he belief that human beings have spirits which elp and protect them is very widespread: 'cults f affliction' in two African societies throw light n the different social roles which this belief an play

O APPEAL FOR HEALTH, personal welfare, r release from suffering and affliction, men erve guardian spirits. If some religious eliefs are pure and simple, the belief that uman beings have personal protectors mong the spirits is not. It is grasped rough diverse modes of symbolic action hich are an integral part, and therefore ss than the sum total, of ritual appealing the gods or the shades of the dead to llow men to live well, both morally and aterially.

The guardian spirits of the Kalanga of otswana in southern Africa and the Ndembu f Zambia will be discussed here, because ere is almost a polar contrast between eir cults. Moreover, the evidence for the dembu cults is rich, perhaps the richest recent anthropological studies.

When the Kalanga of Botswana appeal, domestic ritual, for the well-being of eir children and themselves, the ritual akes them recognize a dangerous likeness: likeness to non-human virtue. Where they ave failed their kin, they have acted as ecomes creatures of other orders, not men. hey must face, and even seek, blame for ns and moral faults. What they desire is elief from personal suffering, and they me to appease afflicting demons, *mazenge*. he Kalanga beg to be freed from a wide ariety of afflictions, from minor ills and ches to chronic diseases, severe pain during regnancy, and childlessness. Their concern the failure of kin to act with humanity nd meet their family obligations.

The epithets of mazenge demons condense eanings which are expanded in the acts, etaphors and stylized clichés of ritual. he epithets are:

Crushers of Meat,
They of the Great River,
They prey at the Tall Grass,
Of snatching without shortcoming,
They came from far, far,
They should mock cramping.

hese epithets convey remoteness, contrariess and a paradoxical purpose of the emons. From a distant grassland near plentiful water, where the guardian demons prey, the demons came in order that they should deceive or mock 'cramping, oppression, pinching'.

Mazenge are capricious demons that possess women. An initiate of the cult may sing of herself as 'carrying an evil'. For these afflicting demons, unlike mankind, are not bound to act according to specific ethical rules. Their demonic order represents disproportion, rapacity, and chaos for mankind. It is in their nature to act according to *lunya*, 'peevishness, spite, antipathy to children'. Their viciousness and contrariness is like human contradiction, it represents the derangement of human morality. Through the cult, congregations catch a glimpse of the kind of world they could expect when evil triumphs.

During the ritual, a woman acts as cult initiate or host. The guardian demon 'come from far, far' is believed to be performing her ritual acts. No longer herself, she becomes a 'lion' and wears a mane of white and black beads on her head; about her body, a mantle of red and black cloth, or of blue printed on white, sometimes with geometric patterns, and usually with lions or cocks and a surrounding design. About her legs are strings of rattles made from the cocoons of winged ants. With a gourd rattle symbolic of the staff of an elder or chief, she regulates the rhythm while dancing or leading a song.

In this role of host she is told of the affliction and pollution, the 'dirt' and 'rubbish' which concerns members of the congregation. She is asked what faults bring on affliction and treats her patients, her kin, with herbs which she digs up while she is possessed. She is expected to be overcome by awe and to enact human vice. Through her symbolic acts she grapples ritually with the sins and faults which are thought to have caused mazenge demons to send affliction: the denial to relatives of the share which they are entitled to 'eat', for example, the cattle of inheritance, bridewealth or slaughter at a feast; the failure to feed relatives and give them their dues from one's earnings; favouring some kin at the expense of others; or the stealing of a kinsman's wife through adultery – exacting the lion's share. In her role as host she grapples with selfishness and rapacity which cheats and dispossesses close relatives of what should be theirs.

The Song of Creeping

During the dance of a ritual, plaints are chanted about suffering from neglect, from old age and from the meanness of relatives, their mocking, and ingratitude. The plaints are addressed to a high place, 'a knoll that has in it mazenge demons', a ritual phrase for the possessed woman. This is the text of a song sung by an old woman, a childless widow, during a ritual on behalf of a sick elder. The chorus is the first two lines, and is repeated after each succeeding line:

Oh knoll,
Oh knoll, having within it mazenge demons.
Let us stamp.
Where we have danced.
Let us stamp.
I tire, I cannot cope.
Where we have danced.
The chief of the black string of bast.
Oh lions, you defecate dung.
Awe, the creeping, creeping.
The spirit of others falls.
Mine is like the stamping block's.
About to be stamped upon, it lies outside.
Most have ended, long ago.
My children died, long ago.
If only I should die myself.
If only I should die myself . . .
My child remained outside.
Let us offer for the spirit of the father.
The spirit of (the sick elder).
How is it mine is so hard?
Mine is like the stamping block's,
About to be stamped upon, it remains outside.
A lullaby stolen in, its owners not here.
Let us offer for the spirit of the father.

The soloist sings of a basic activity of domestic life, an activity on which it depends and which is the special preserve of women: the provision of meal. The singer calls on another cult member, who is reluctant to join her in possession, and compares this woman to a stamping block. The singer urges that this reluctance, and remaining outside in neglect, should be compared to a block about to be used and thus left around in the cooking compound. Her step pounds on the floor of her kitchen in the rhythm of the pole on the block, and she sings of her dancing as stamping: the rhythm of the household economy is the rhythm of the ritual. She alludes to her childlessness – the children she bore died – and she comments on the conduct of her kinswoman

Richard Werbner

who is, in the cult, her 'child'. In the ritual, too, she is childless for her child is 'hard', with the hardness of the block to be beaten, and denies a father (the sick elder of this hamlet) the ritual services which he requires to be healed.

The soloist's plaint has its force through a coalescence of meanings, characterizing her personal lot in life and the events of the immediate performance. Three lines show this most clearly: The chief of the black string of bast; Oh lions, you defecate dung; Awe, the creeping, creeping.

The first of these lines represents her as 'the chief of black grief'. She wears an emblem of seniority, the black string of bast. This is an emblem of affliction, for 'string' and 'cry' are one word and symbol in Kalanga. It is a symbol of black grief. In the next line she sings of defecating. A host feeds on special food for she should defecate distinctively and ritually. Doing so is an act symbolic of a host's role and its part in pollution: she must 'make the occult patent'. In this song, the soloist's use of the image of lions defecating sets in relief, by juxtaposition, her chiefship.

Feeling the 'Creeps'

Next, she sings of the 'creeps', the awesome feeling, which Kalanga say is a sensation of the hair standing on end. A host ought to feel this at the onset of possession, when she must act as though overcome by the urge to dance and fall possessed. The singer threatens that the reluctant host is to be the prey of the demons and is to feel the creeps. The singer represents herself as being like a tracker of animals, knowing them before seeing them, by their dung and its location. The phrase 'creeping, creeping' used for awe, *manyawi nyawi*, plays on that for 'you defecate', *manya*. It conveys what is unseen yet known to the tracker: the frenzy, the excitement, the terror, the exaggerated self-confidence of the prey. The chiefship of black grief, dung, awe, thus follow together, belonging in one single image and, within a unity, representing the primary aspects of the role which is being ritualized.

Through such metaphors and acts of the cult, close relatives declare symbolically their shared anticipation, their mutual dependence, and their subjection to com-

Left For the ritual through which the Kalanga of Botswana appeal to their guardian spirits, the 'host' women wear rattles made from cocoons of winged ants around their legs; their black and blue garments symbolize the rain, and coloured beads are worn to please the sky god *Far left* A woman of the tribe performs a ritual dance in her kitchen: the food cooking in the pot symbolizes the closest relationships of kin

mandment within a realm of domesticity. They carry on a dialogue about animal virtue which compels them to share a universe of meanings about human sins and faults. A realm of experience is enhanced and given its special location in a symbolic order through the Kalanga cult of affliction.

Close relatives are coerced, ritually. However, they are not involved in a widening circle of outsiders or disinterested persons. The congregation at a Kalanga ritual of affliction is, even at its widest, a body of kin and neighbours. It is not a casual assembly but a congregation of related persons brought together because of their specific interests in one another. Highly exclusive events are confined to the closest relatives.

A Universe of Meanings

The Ndembu have many cults of affliction in which they placate their guardian spirits the shades of the dead. These Ndembu cults are a luxurious growth and each one is lush in symbols and secrets. Elaborate and distinct regalia blazon one and all. They are thick with special privileges and duties: no one need lack a place. Taken together, they represent a vast splendour of all-absorbing emblems and ritual qualifications.

Almost any Ndembu, through their cults, can convey secret notions to some, and exclude from a universe of meanings others of their close relatives, fellow villagers, neighbours and friends. In these cults the closest kin continually promote symbolic disharmony. They do so through symbols that are intelligible to unrelated persons but not to all the congregation of close kin. Indeed, some kin in the congregation are mystified in their ignorance. Each of the multitude of cults may be understood by some of the kin, but not by all. Embarrassment and shame at ignorance are necessary features of the Ndembu cults of affliction. A man driven to overcome his shame can never succeed. Once he gains understanding as a novice there is yet another cult beyond his comprehension, there is yet a further elaboration of esoterica to grasp.

Secret associations multiply. It is fitting to speak of a 'ritual man' among the Ndembu; for the more a man invests in cults, the more he extends his wealth of symbols and the range of persons with whom he is bound through shared secrets. But he must continually participate in the exclusion of others, including some who have lived or still live in the greatest intimacy with him; and he is compelled, by his increasing investment in cults, to sustain greater and greater symbolic disharmony.

V.W.Turner points out that the impact of these rituals is important for linking inter-village and internal village relations. The rituals' consequences are not confined to a distinct body of relatives, to one village or smaller area within the wider Ndembu region. According to Turner, the Ndembu invoke 'the participation of the wider society, represented by adepts drawn from all over the Ndembu region, in the conflicts of the narrower unit of the village.' He considers that in some of their rituals the Ndembu urge one another to come to terms in quarrels. However, they do not act in rituals of affliction in order to seal off strife between relatives, and contain the struggles within an arena of their immediate village or kinship relationships. Turner suggests that such rituals 'may have the subordinate function of reintegrating the ritual subject's village.' He observes that they 'dominantly emphasize the unity of all Ndembu'.

Competition for Status

Both the Kalanga and the Ndembu compete for status through their cults. The Kalanga do so, however, without upsetting the seniority between generations and so reordering other relationships between kin. As a Kalanga host ages, her seniority increases. Her status is the highest in the cult, because her authority is extended through the great number of hosts whom she has initiated and who are her juniors.

By contrast, among the Ndembu, there is a multiplication of ritual privileges, duties and claims against others, irrespective of their kinship or residence. Most Ndembu join several cults. Some begin with one, others with another and they advance their status in each at varying rates and at irregular intervals during their lives. The standing of kin in a cult may be the reverse of their standing as senior and junior kin and as this varies from cult to cult the multiplicity of cults intricately complicates the relationships between kin. Each performance promotes the differential advancement in status of particular kin and associates. A member's status becomes higher the more he or she takes part in rituals and invests in payments to acquire knowledge of the cult's medicines and techniques.

The Meaning of Domesticity

Any series of economic transactions may add up as relative gains or losses in status. However, goods offered in a cult of affliction are links in a chain of symbolic statements which, among the Kalanga at least, fix the meaning of domesticity and of close kinship and neighbourliness. Among the Kalanga close relatives are compelled to recognize and make manifest the occult, not merely affirm its existence. The paradoxes of their interdependence are made the subject of concurrence in a symbolic idiom.

Through the cult they are able to tell one another home truths. But they must do so within an idiom which is both symbolic and cryptic in the sense that all its statements speak of the occult, of what is hidden and unknowable. The secrets of a group of kin are grasped in this way, ritually, within prescribed metaphors, cliches, take-offs, jokes and puns. Mockery and humour too, is ritualized in the cult, and kin must meet to share it among themselves, with a subtlety of innuendo which they alone can fully appreciate.

To understand their deployment of the symbols, in any of its subtlety, one must be an intimate or a kinsman and conversely, being an intimate, one is required to deploy these symbols in expression of one's relationships of intimacy and domesticity. The symbols advance the relationships, and the relationships sustain and carry forward the symbols. Close relatives compete and struggle with one another through and about their ritual investments, for it is through investment in symbols that they invest in each other.

Those present in the congregation are required to pledge themselves to carry forward relationships and to reconstitute, in agreement, a universe of meanings, symbolically representing what must ultimately be unknowable – the occult. At any performance, some kin can be (indeed, they must be) excluded from the congregation while being included in the dialogue of the occasion. They are not excluded from the knowledge of the symbolic discourse that is pursued, although they cannot and must not attend. Most of the significance of the discourse, in their absence, and about them, depends on the expectation of the congregation that, in the future, some of the excluded relatives will become aware of what has transpired and will have to modify their conduct accordingly.

R.P.WERBNER

Guardian Genius

BELIEF IN GUARDIAN SPIRITS is found in many other parts of the world besides Africa, in various forms. A man may be believed to have a protective spirit which accompanies him all his life, and which he acquires at birth or at puberty. Sometimes it is the spirit of an ancestor, sometimes not; it may cease to exist when its human companion dies, or it may live on. The guardian is particularly important in the lore of American Indian peoples, where it usually shows itself to a man in a vision and in animal form. Supernatural beings may guard places as well as people, like the spirits which ward off evil from oriental temples or the dragon that guards the treasure-hoard.

In modern English we have turned what was originally a guardian spirit into the characteristic intellectual or artistic endowment of each person. This is the 'genius', which was the Latin word for each man's spirit protector (the guardian spirit of each woman was called a Juno). The word means 'the begetter' and the genius seems to have been the procreative force in a man, principally occupied in helping him to satisfy his natural appetites. The genius was honoured

Left Guardian spirit from a Chinese tomb. The belief that human beings have persona protectors in the spirit world occurs in various forms in many societies; at the Wat Po temple in Bangkok, for example, the figure of a Dutch sea-captain, evidently regarded as a peculiarly formidable guardian, keeps evil spirits at bay

C. M. Dixon

in Roman birthday celebrations. The Greek equivalent was the personal daemon, mentioned by some writers as accompanying a man throughout his life, and it may be that growing belief in the existence of this personal guardian was responsible for the increasing attention given to celebrating people's birthdays in classical times.

The Romans also believed in the *genius loci,* which guarded a particular place. It had its Greek counterparts in the nymphs and animistic spirits attached to streams, trees, mountains and a variety of other natural features.

In the Old Testament the book of Daniel (chapters 10, 12) mentions angels who watch over different kingdoms and peoples. The garden of Eden was guarded by cherubim (Genesis 3.24), winged creatures descended from Mesopotamian spirits believed to intercede for men with the gods and placed at the entrances of temples and palaces to guard them. Two cherubim with wings outstretched guarded the Ark of Yahweh (Exodus 25.18).

Jesus advised his disciples not to despise children, 'for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father' (Matthew 18.10). This was taken to mean that each child has a protecting angel and influenced the belief, accepted by medieval theologians, that every Christian has a guardian angel. The early Christian Shepherd of Hermas says that each man is accompanied by an angel of righteousness who inspires his good actions and an evil spirit which inspires his bad ones.

In Mohammedan belief, each man is guarded by two angels during the day and another two during the night. They protect him from harm and record all his actions, in preparation for judgement day. Sunset and sunrise, when these angelic sentries change guard, are particularly dangerous moments in which a man may fall into the clutches of demons.

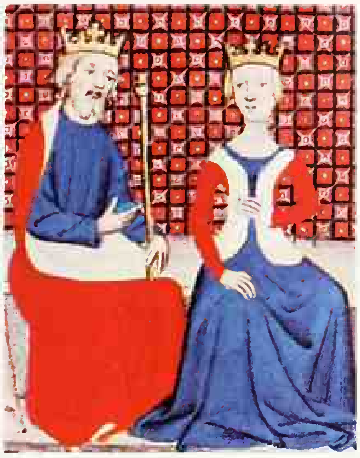
(See also ANGELS; DOUBLES; GREAT PLAINS INDIANS; LARES; NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.)

FURTHER READING: V.W.Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society* (Humanities, 1972) and *The Drums of Affliction* (Cornell University Press, 1981); M. Gluckman, *The Allocation of Responsibility* (Manchester University Press, England, 1970).

Guinevere

n the Arthurian legends, the wife of Arthur and mistress of Lancelot; in arly Welsh stories she was Gwenhwyfar, and there were said to be hree of her; there was an old heme of her abduction and rescue; n the later legends, she brought Arthur the Round Table as her dowry, and the traitor Mordred eized her, or tried to, when he usurped Arthur's crown; the monks of Glastonbury said that she was buried there, with Arthur.

See ARTHUR; LANCELOT.



British Museum

Guisers

People dressed up, a general term, used particularly in Scotland, for the dancers and masqueraders who appear in curious costumes, disguises and masks at folk dances and ceremonies; the masked dancers and children in grotesque costumes at Hallowe'en are examples.

Michael Busselle

A modern mystic who believed that man could develop spiritually only by consciously labouring and suffering, Gurdjieff's teachings brought not o much peace as 'a special kind of inner warfare'

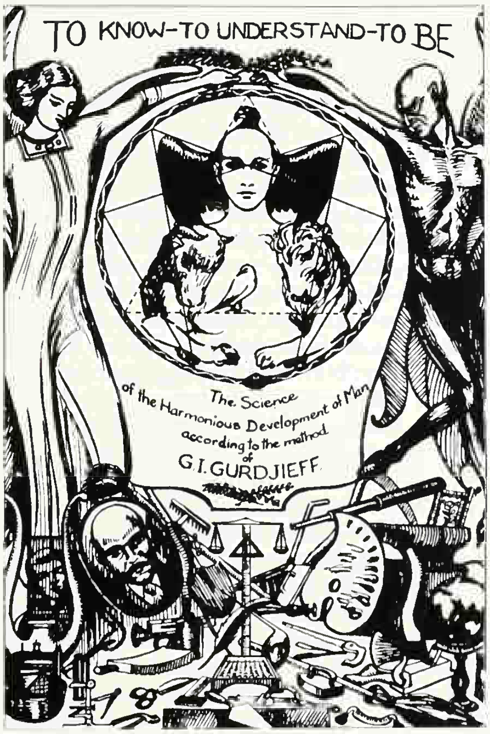
GURDJIEFF

BORN IN ALEXANDROPOL, near the Persian rontier of Russia in about 1877, of a Greek ather and an Armenian mother, George vanovitch Gurdjieff was brought up in an ntique, patriarchal world where children were put to sleep at night with the story of Gilgamesh, the great hero of Sumerian and Babylonian epic poetry. While he was still a very young man, Gurdjieff 'disappeared' nto that cauldron of history, tradition and deas that we know as the Middle East. ndeed, in his second book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, he describes an even wider orbit, taking in the Gobi Desert, Mecca and Tibet; but in this case the names may stand either for places or for symbols n his unremitting search for a 'real and universal knowledge'. 'I was not alone,' his disciple, the Russian writer P. D. Ouspensky quotes him as saying. 'There were all sorts f specialists among us. We called ourselves "The Seekers of Truth"'. Ouspensky ecorded his first meeting with Gurdjieff as having taken place in the autumn of 1914. 'I realized,' he wrote, 'that I had met with a ompletely new system of thought surpassing ll I had known before. This system threw quite a new light on psychology and explained what I could not understand before in esoteric ideas.'

During the first two years of the First World War Gurdjieff elaborated his teachings o groups in St Petersburg and Moscow but with the onset of the Russian Revolution, light was inevitable. His journey with his ollowers through Russia to the Caucasus, hen to Constantinople and at last to the West has all the elements of a modern thriller. But it is given an epic quality and an extra dimension by the fact that Gurdjieff used the hardships and dangers – always or him the true stuff of existence – to exemplify his teaching, and required of his pupils that they should escape not merely with their lives but with their Life. It was not until 1922 that he succeeded in bringing o the West what he had found in the East, by establishing his pilgrim band at the Chateau du Prieure, near Fontainebleau, where he founded his *Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man*.

Gurdjieff never openly disclosed the source of his teaching. By examining his writings and the numerous commentaries upon them it might be possible to discover parallels in various traditions but the fundamental features of his method cannot be traced to any one source. Ouspensky quotes him as admitting 'I will say that, if you like, this is esoteric Christianity.' In fact, there seems to be no reason to reject this when one remembers that Christianity, as Gurdjieff knew it, was the heir to centuries of religious tradition and must have drawn into itself early pre-Christian Hittite, Assyrian, Phrygian and Persian elements; and that there is nothing so explosive as old ideas restated in contemporary terms – as the Western world was to discover when Gurdjieff burst upon it.

Design for the programme of Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, 1923. Gurdjieff insisted that man is asleep: only when he wakes, to both consciousness and conscience, does his true evolution begin. The guardian angel and attendant demon support the symbols of the four evangelists in a pentagram, symbol of man as the potential god


TO KNOW-TO UNDERSTAND-TO BE
The Science of the Harmonious Development of Man according to the method of
G.I. GURDJIEFF

Intentional Suffering

His impact was tremendous. It was clear that he had come not to bring peace but a special kind of inner warfare, and that his mission in life was to destroy men's complacency and make them aware of their limitations. Only by such means, by what he called 'Conscious labours and intentional suffering', was it possible to bring about man's inner development. It very soon appeared that the Work, as his method came to be called, had been only too accurately named. Writers, artists, and men and women from all kinds of professions found themselves digging wells, chopping down trees and breaking stones by day, while at night they were required to take part in sacred dances or 'Movements', or to assist at one of Gurdjieff's great feasts where, under the influence of good food, vodka and the watchful eye of the Master, opportunities were provided for those who had the courage to come face to face with themselves.

By 1924 the Work was sufficiently well established for Gurdjieff to set out on the first of his visits to the United States where in January, in New York, a group of 40 pupils gave demonstrations of his Movements. Two thirds of these evenings were devoted to the sacred dances, and the remainder to what was described as 'Trick, Semi-Trick and Real Supernatural Phenomena'. The audience was invited to distinguish between them and reminded that 'the study of the first two was held to be indispensable to the study of the third, since to understand the last a perfectly impartial attitude and a judgment not burdened by pre-established beliefs were necessary'.

It is clear from Gurdjieff's writings that hypnotism, mesmerism and various arcane methods of expanding consciousness must have played a large part in the studies of the Seekers of Truth. But none of these processes had any bearing on black magic, which according to Gurdjieff 'has always one definite characteristic. It is the tendency to use people for some, even the best of aims, without their knowledge and understanding, either by producing in them faith and infatuation or by acting upon them through fear. There is, in fact, neither red, green nor yellow magic. There is "doing". Only "doing" is magic.' Properly to realize the scale of what Gurdjieff meant by magic, one has to remember his continually repeated aphorism, 'Only he who can *be* can do'; and its corollary that, without 'being' nothing is 'done', things simply 'happen'.

The American tour brought a new influx of pupils to the Prieure and, as usual, Gurdjieff, by deliberate indirection, set them to find directions out. 'The teaching', wrote one pupil, 'was given in fragments – often in unexpected ways – and we had to learn to put the pieces together and connect them up through our observations and experiences.' It was in the late summer of 1924, that Gurdjieff, slowly re-assembling his forces after a near-fatal car accident, began to put those separated fragments together in the form of a book.

While helping the pupils who remained, Gurdjieff wrote incessantly at Fontainebleau, on his frequent motoring trips, or seated at a table in the Café de la Paix in Paris where he had long been a familiar figure.

Called *All and Everything*, the book attempts to cover every aspect of the life of man. Into it Gurdjieff gathered the fundamentals of his teaching. Man, we are told, has a unique function in the cosmological scheme and enters into obligation by the very fact of being born. But the awareness of this is not a gift of Nature; and neither are individuality, consciousness, free will and an immortal soul. These attributes, which man mistakenly believes he already possesses, have to be acquired by his own special efforts. Above all, the book repeatedly insists that man is asleep. It is only at the moment when he wakes, not merely to consciousness but also to conscience – indeed, for Gurdjieff, the words were synonymous – that his true evolution can begin.

The Desire to Awake

Gurdjieff describes his concept of good and evil:
'A permanent idea of good and evil can be formed in man only in connection with a permanent aim and permanent understanding. If a man understands that he is asleep and if he wishes to awake, then everything that helps him to awake will be *good* and everything that hinders him, everything that prolongs his sleep, will be *evil*. Exactly in the same way will he understand what is good and evil for other people. What helps them to awake is good, what hinders them is evil. But this is only so for those who want to awake . . . Those who do not understand that they are asleep . . . cannot have understanding of good and evil.'

P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*

Monsieur Bonbon

The manuscript, constantly revised, now became the focal point of the teaching, not only in France but also in New York during his two visits to America in 1929 and 1933. In the latter year the Prieure was sold and his life entered another phase. Gurdjieff never stood still but was always growing, always experimenting, always searching. After enjoying his fame for nine years, he seems to have retired into the shadows, clearly for reasons of his own. 'He is no longer teaching,' said his older pupils when new people wanted to make direct contact with him. But one of his pet tenets was that the Work was designed not to discover something new but to recover that which is lost, and an intrepid few set out to do just that. If Gurdjieff accepted them as pupils, they were put into small intimate groups, each member depending upon the others, like mountain climbers upon a rope, no group having any connection with the others. Gurdjieff's teaching was essentially intimate and personal, and his insistence that by the very nature of the Work he could not have many pupils appears valid and inevitable.

The published reminiscences of various members of these small groups bear witness to the fact that he was, indeed, teaching in the '30s; but quietly, as though it were a question of holding his powers in reserve. Those who knew Gurdjieff as a teacher could gather only by rumour and hearsay that there were other Gurdjieffs: the healer of psychic illnesses, the curer of alcoholism, the business man and the Gurdjieff known as 'Monsieur Bonbon', an old eccentric gentleman whose sole mission in life, it appeared, was to dispense candy to local cronies and children.

In 1939 Gurdjieff again visited America, a country that he held in affectionate regard because of its 'brotherliness'. On his return to Paris, war was close and when it broke out Gurdjieff disappeared from the sight of all but his French pupils until the Liberation. It is said that he sustained himself during those lean years by putting about the rumour that he was heir to a Texan oil well. Nobody was more surprised than the French shopkeepers to find, when his British and American pupils streamed back and paid the bills, that the story was essentially true.

The year 1946 marked the beginning of the last phase of his teaching, a period that, for those who had known him earlier, was richer than any that had gone before. For a little over three years new adherents and old pupils who brought their own pupils and children, flocked to his small room to listen to a reading from one of his manuscripts, *All and Everything; Meetings with Remarkable Men; Life is Real Only When I Am;* to hear him play on his small hand accordion the music he had composed for the different chapters; or to receive the bounty of his teaching in whatever form it might be given. 'If take, then take, no sipping, no trifling', was one of his favourite aphorisms and for many the special nourishment that was offered in addition to the delicious edibles was indigestible, hard to stomach.

The exotic flavours and the vodka in which the famous 'Toasts to the Idiots' were drunk ('idiot' in this case having its original Greek meaning of private person, that which in myself I am) did not make things easier. But easiness was not the aim. The patriarchal host, massive of presence, radiating a serene power at once formidable and reassuring, dispensed this 'food' in various ways, always unexpected; sometimes in thunderclaps of rage, sometimes telling a story that only one of all the table would know was meant for himself, sometimes merely by look or gesture thrusting home the truth. Masks were mercilessly stripped off. Beneath the exacting benevolence o Gurdjieff's gaze everyone was naked.

But occasionally for those who could face their own situations, he would fleetingly le fall his own mask. It was possible then to see that behind the apparent mercilessness was sorrow and compassion. At such moments his 'humanity-ness' (a key word in his odd English vocabulary) would radiantly declare itself. If his aim was to teach men how to rise to the possibility of saying 'I am', he never forgot that 'thou art' and 'he is complete the conjugation.

'Man Must Live Till He Dies'

In addition to the activities in his own apartment, Gurdjieff now instituted at the Salle Pleyel daily practices of the Movements tha were so essential a part of his teaching. But i was not only in Paris that the Work progressed so vigorously year by year. There were groups in England and the United States and others were now established in Holland Sweden, Germany and South America During what was to be his last visit to America, on 13 January 1949 Gurdjieff announced that he was ready to publish *Al and Everything*. At the same time, those English disciples who had joined the Paris groups after Ouspensky's death in 1947 arranged for the publication of *In Search o the Miraculous*, Ouspensky's long withheld account of his early years with Gurdjieff.

These two books, the first giving an added dimension to the second, and the second clarifying the first, opened up the teaching Gurdjieff's health was now faltering but such was his powerhouse of inner strength that few could believe it. Throughout the summer, after his return from New York, the Work went on with added intensity. While serenely putting his own house in order Gurdjieff used every moment as a moment of teaching, and every aspect of his fading strength as a reminder to his pupils that 'Man must live till he dies'. In Gurdjieff's sense, to 'live' was consciously to labour and voluntarily to suffer. This he himself did, with constancy and deliberation, until 29 October 1949.

Since his death his chosen pupils have carried on his work, and groups are to be found everywhere in the Western world. The Movements have been accurately documented in a series of films; his second book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, has been published and the third is in preparation. The siftings of time are likely to prove that these records are his proper monument. In them the man and his myth are one.

P. TRAVERS

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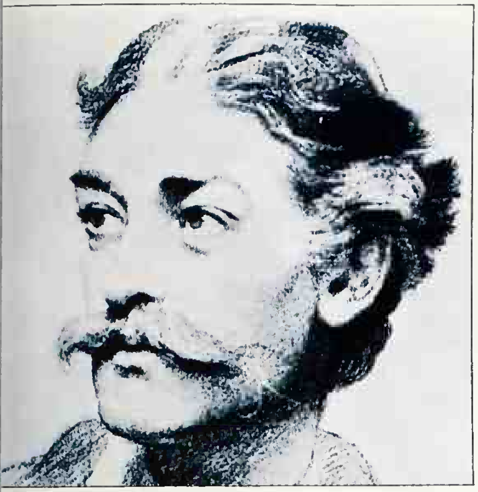
EDMUND GURNEY



J. H. Cutten

Portrait of Edmund Gurney, completed shortly before he died in June 1888; he was one of the first scientific investigators of paranormal phenomena

A FOUNDER of the Society for Psychical Research and one of the most important pioneers in the scientific investigation of ostensibly paranormal phenomena, Edmund Gurney was born on 23 March 1847. After being privately educated he entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1866 as a Minor Scholar in Classics. His undergraduate career was unusually prolonged, owing to spells of ill-health, but he succeeded in being elected to a Trinity Fellowship in 1872.

Gurney was more interested in music than in classics, but after years of dogged application, he had to admit that he could never have been more than a moderately competent performer. However, he continued to reflect on the theory of music, and in 1880 published *The Power of Sound*; the great American psychologist William James considered that when it appeared it was 'the most important work on aesthetics in the English language'.

Gurney decided to become a doctor and studied medicine partly in London and partly in Cambridge, from 1877 to 1881. But throughout his life he was intimately aware of, and unusually sensitive to, the sufferings of men and animals, and early n 1881 he abandoned medicine. In May 1881 he became a student at Lincoln's Inn n London, but within a year had abandoned his law studies. In 1877 he married Kate Sara Sibley. They had one child, a daughter, born in 1881.

The foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in February 1882 supplied the occasion and the motive for the astonishing output of first-class work which he achieved in the few years that remained to him. He was Honorary Secretary of the Society from October 1883 until his death in June 1888.

Gurney's main achievements, after the publication of the *Power of Sound*, were concerned with philosophical and ethical reflections, and with psychical research. The former are mostly collected in the first volume of his two-volume book *Tertium Quid*, containing an essay on 'The Nature of Evidence in Matters Extraordinary' which is directly relevant to psychical research and it is probably still the best critical treatment of this fundamental topic. The main subjects in the other essays in this volume are Gurney's doctrine of pain in general, and the ethics of vivisection in particular; his contempt for the idealization of natural science and its practitioners, and for the optimism associated with it; and his grounds for thinking that survival of bodily death is at any rate abstractly possible.

Gurney's position may be summarized roughly as follows. He held that the notion of survival is not inconceivable, and that it is not so improbable as to be unworthy of further consideration. He himself had little if any desire to survive. He realized that even if survival was a fact, things might possibly be as bad as, or even worse than, they would be if no one survived. But he felt certain that if no one survives, and there is therefore no possibility of the evils and injustices inevitable in this life being redressed, then the world is so predominantly bad that a reasonable man in a cool hour would desire the early and complete cessation of the human race.

Gurney's work in psychical research deals mainly with hypnotism and phantasms of the living. His research into hypnotism falls into two main divisions. The first is a study, theoretical and practical, of the purely psychological features of hypnotism, without regard to any paranormal phenomena which may be associated with it. The second is an experimental study of ostensibly paranormal features in connection with some cases of hypnosis, for example, in the telepathic induction of the hypnotic state, in community of sensation between operator and subject, and in some of the feats performed by subjects under hypnosis.

Overdose of Chloroform

Most of Gurney's experiments were done in Brighton, with a Mr. G. A. Smith as hypnotiser, and with subjects chosen by him. Smith had been a stage hypnotist, and he subsequently became Gurney's secretary and trusted assistant. There can be no doubt that he produced genuine deep hypnosis in certain subjects. But he had formerly been associated with a man called Blackburn who, very much later when he mistakenly believed Smith to be dead, alleged publicly that they had at one time been co-operating in the production of fraudulent (non-hypnotic) phenomena, and this has cast a certain shadow on all experiments in which Smith played an essential part.

A book called *Phantasms of the Living* was published under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research in 1886. The authors were given as Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and F. Podmore. Myers contributed the introduction and an important note in the second of the two volumes, and Podmore gave invaluable help in collating and examining the evidence. All the rest of the book is due to Gurney.

The essential factual basis of the work is the reports of 357 spontaneous cases, for all of which the evidence is first-hand and is regarded by the authors as being of first-rate authority. Some idea of the labour involved in producing the book can be judged from the following facts. Gurney often spent eight or nine hours a day writing 50 to 80 letters in his own hand, and almost every living person who gave evidence concerning the 'phantasms' was personally interviewed by at least one of the three authors. The chief part of this delicate work fell on Gurney.

A 'phantasm of the living' is experienced if, and only if, a person has a hallucinatory apparent perception as of seeing, hearing, or touching someone else, who is at the time out of range of the first person's actual sense-perception, and if the latter is alive in the flesh at the time, or was alive very shortly before. Such an experience is classed as 'veridical' (that is, coinciding with realities) if, and only if, the actual state and situation at the time of the person appearing corresponds in considerable detail with the hallucination. Otherwise it is 'delusive'.

Stories of such experiences, alleged to have been veridical, have been common in all ages and places. Many of these are no doubt false. Others, which may well be true, may reasonably be ascribed to mere chance-coincidence, or explained by a combination of normal causes and unusual circumstances. The question is whether or not there are nevertheless a substantial number of cases which fall under neither of these heads; and, if so, what is the most plausible kind of paranormal explanation of them.

The authors of *Phantasms of the Living* concluded that there was, in the cases which they investigated, a substantial residuum of well-attested veridical experiences of the kind in question, the veridicality of which cannot reasonably be assigned to mere chance-coincidence, and cannot plausibly be explained by any combination of generally acknowledged normal causes. The most probable explanation of the veridicality of these is in terms of telepathic communication of experiences between the two people concerned.

The book gave, for the first time, a clear formulation of the questions at issue and an extremely acute and fair-minded discussion of each of them against a background of relevant experimental work, and of a large number of carefully scrutinized reports of spontaneous cases.

Edmund Gurney died in June 1889 at the age of 43 at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton, where he had taken a room for the night. Next day he was found dead, with a sponge-bag pressed over his nose and mouth. At the subsequent inquest the jury returned the verdict that death had been accidental, and that it had been the result of an overdose of chloroform inhaled to relieve pain. Very naturally, from that day to this, there has been some suspicion that he committed suicide. There is no good reason to doubt the evidence on which the jury reached their verdict; and there is no positive evidence for the view that Gurney had some special reason for committing suicide. Nevertheless in view of his known temperament and his published opinions, suicide seems by no means unplausible.

C. D. BROAD

An ancient Celtic divinity who has affinities with the gods of Germany and Gaul, Gwydion is a poet and magician, prophet and astronomer; he embodies the virtues and skills that the Celts revered in both their gods and their heroes

GWYDION

A SURPRISING AMOUNT of genuine pagan tradition is contained in medieval Irish and Welsh literature. In both Irish and Welsh mythology there seems to have been the concept of a hierarchy of deities, headed by the mother of the gods and her three sons. In Welsh literature these beings are the central characters of the tales in the 'Four Branches' of the *Mabinogion*, stories which are concerned with gods, not with men, and in which fragments of ancient cult legends are fused and confused with folklore motifs and Christian allusions (see MABINOGION).

One of these characters is Gwydion, a powerful sorcerer and skilled craftsman, whose name possibly means 'the prophetic one' or 'the inspired one', and who was the son of the Welsh divine mother, Don (the equivalent of Danu or Anu in Ireland). By an incestuous union with his sister, the goddess Aranrhod, Gwydion was the father of Lleu Llaw Gyffes, who as Lugus in Gaul and Lugh in Ireland was one of the most widely invoked deities of the pagan Celtic world (see LLEU).

Gwydion is mentioned frequently in early Welsh literature and is one of the principal characters in the story of *Math, son of Mathonwy* in the *Mabinogion*. Gwydion and his brother Gilfaethwy are nephews of Math, a renowned magician who has instructed Gwydion in enchantment and sorcery. Math was forbidden to be without a virgin in whose lap his feet were held, except in time of war. This virgin is Goewin, a girl of exceptional beauty and virtue. Gilfaethwy falls in love with her and Gwydion, detecting this, determines to help him. Extreme care is necessary, for as Gilfaethwy says to his brother: 'Thou knowest the peculiarity of Math son of Mathonwy; whatever the whispering, however low, there be between men, once the wind has met it he will know of it.' But Gwydion uses his powers of sorcery to outwit his uncle.

Otherworld Swine

The next motif is important because it connects Gwydion with swine and gives him the role of culture hero, the bringer of benefit and improvement to his people. He promises to fetch the wonderful otherworld pigs which belonged to Pryderi, ruler of Dyfed. With 11 others disguised as bards, he goes to Pryderi's court and is made welcome there, for Gwydion is 'the best teller of tales in the world' – an essential requisite for a Celtic deity. In exchange for the swine he gives Pryderi 12 stallions, 12 greyhounds and 12 golden shields. These he has made by magic but the spell will last only for a day, and Gwydion and his men hurry away with the swine. Pryderi and his men overtake them, and Math joins in the battle. This leaves the virgin Goewin on her own: Gwydion and his brother return to Math's court where both rape the girl in Math's own bed. Then they return to the battle.

Gwydion finally defeats Pryderi in single combat. When Math discovers what has happened to Goewin, he marries her and transforms his nephews into wild animals. Gwydion becomes a stag and Gilfaethwy a hind, and they go forth for a year, returning at the end of it with a fawn which Math turns into a fine boy, whom he then sends to be fostered. He strikes the men again, turning Gilfaethwy into a boar and Gwydion into a wild sow. At the end of a year they return, accompanied by a young animal which, when touched by Math's wand, becomes a handsome auburn-haired boy. Next, Math turns the two brothers into a wolf and a she-wolf. They return at the end of the year, accompanied by a wolf-cub which Math transforms into a boy in the same way. He then restores the men to their own shapes, and tells them that the punishment is over.

Flowers of the Oak

The episodes concerning Lleu Llaw Gyffes begin here. Aranrhod, Gwydion's sister, is proved not to be a virgin when she undergoes Math's chastity test. When she runs from the room she drops a boy-child, and also a 'small something else'. Gwydion snatches this up before anyone has seen it properly, and hides it in a chest. It is another boy, clearly the result of his incestuous union with his sister. Gwydion looks after the boy himself.

One day Gwydion and his son set out for Caer Aranrhod, his sister's home. She welcomes him but refuses to give the boy a name, and Gwydion vows she will do this in spite of herself. Next day he walks with his son along the sea-shore where he forms a magical ship. 'And they began to fashion shoes, and to stitch them.' When they are seen from the fortress, 'he took away their own semblance, and put another semblance upon them, so that they would not be recognized'. Aranrhod asks for a pair of golden shoes, but Gwydion will not make a pair of the correct size until she comes to have her foot measured. This she does, and a wren alights upon the ship while she is there.

Her son aims at it and hits it perfectly. 'Faith,' says she, 'with a deft hand has the fair one hit it.' Gwydion says: 'He has now got a name and good enough is his name. Lleu Llaw Gyffes is he from now on.' (*Lleu* means 'fair', *llaw* 'hand' and *gyffes* 'deft, skilful'.) Everything magical now vanishes and the son is changed back into his own shape. Gwydion's sister swears a destiny on her son, that he will never bear arms until she herself equips him with them.

In due course, Gwydion and Lleu, who is now a young man, go once again to Aranrhod's dwelling in the guise of two youths, claiming to be bards. They are welcomed, for 'Gwydion was a good teller of tales'. They go to bed and 'at early cock-crow Gwydion arose. And then he summoned to him his magic and his power'.

By daylight the countryside was in a state of uproar and Aranrhod bursts into the room crying, 'We cannot see the colour of the deep for all the ships thronging together.' She goes to get arms for the two men an Gwydion tricks her into arming her so completely herself. All the turmoil the ceases and she realizes that Gwydion ha got the better of her yet again. She swear Lleu shall never have a wife 'of the race no on earth'. Gwydion goes to get Math's aid and together they make a wife for Lleu fro the flowers of the oak and of the broom, an of meadowsweet.

Lleu is given land by Math and settle down to rule prosperously. However, on on occasion when he is away from home, hi wife Blodeuwedd is unfaithful to him; sh and her lover, Gronw Bebyr, plot his death Although Lleu is practically invincible, hi wife persuades him to tell her the one way i which he can be killed, and the lovers mak their preparations. Lleu is struck by Gron with the fatal, poisoned spear in the manne which he has divulged. He screams and flie away in the form of an eagle.

Math and Gwydion are deeply distresse when the news reaches them; and Gwydio sets out to find his son. Eventually he come to an oak tree, to which he has been led b a sow which has been feeding on Lleu' rotting flesh and maggots, and sees hi emaciated in the tree. He persuades him t come down to his lap and turns him bac into human form. Lleu is only skin and bon but skilful physicians nurse him back t health in less than a year. Gwydion find Blodeuwedd and says to her: 'I will not sla thee. I will do to thee that which is worse that is' said he, 'I will let thee go in the for of a bird.' He turns her into an owl and sh flies away. Lleu then slays Gronw with hi spear; and rules his territory in peace an prosperity once more.

Sorcerer and Hero

In this tale, as in other fragments fro medieval Welsh literature, we get glimpses o a much more archaic world than the on which the story-teller describes, a worl which is fully familiar in terms of Celti mythology. Gwydion is clearly an ancien deity who has affinities with Lugus himself with Odin of Germanic tradition, and wit Mercury. His cunning and magical skills ar matched by his brilliant craftsmanship.

He fights as an armed hero and as sorcerer, combining both powers in order t attain invariable success. He is a poet, splendid story-teller, a prophet and a astronomer. Animals and birds are closel linked with his legend. The frequency wit which pigs figure in the tale may indicate a earlier and more specific association wit these and other animals, as may the transformations practised upon him and hi brother by Math. In origin Gwydion mus have been a god of the most sophisticate type, according to Celtic preference. Hi virtues and his many skills are those tha were most deeply revered by the Celts i their gods and in their heroes alike.

ANNE ROS

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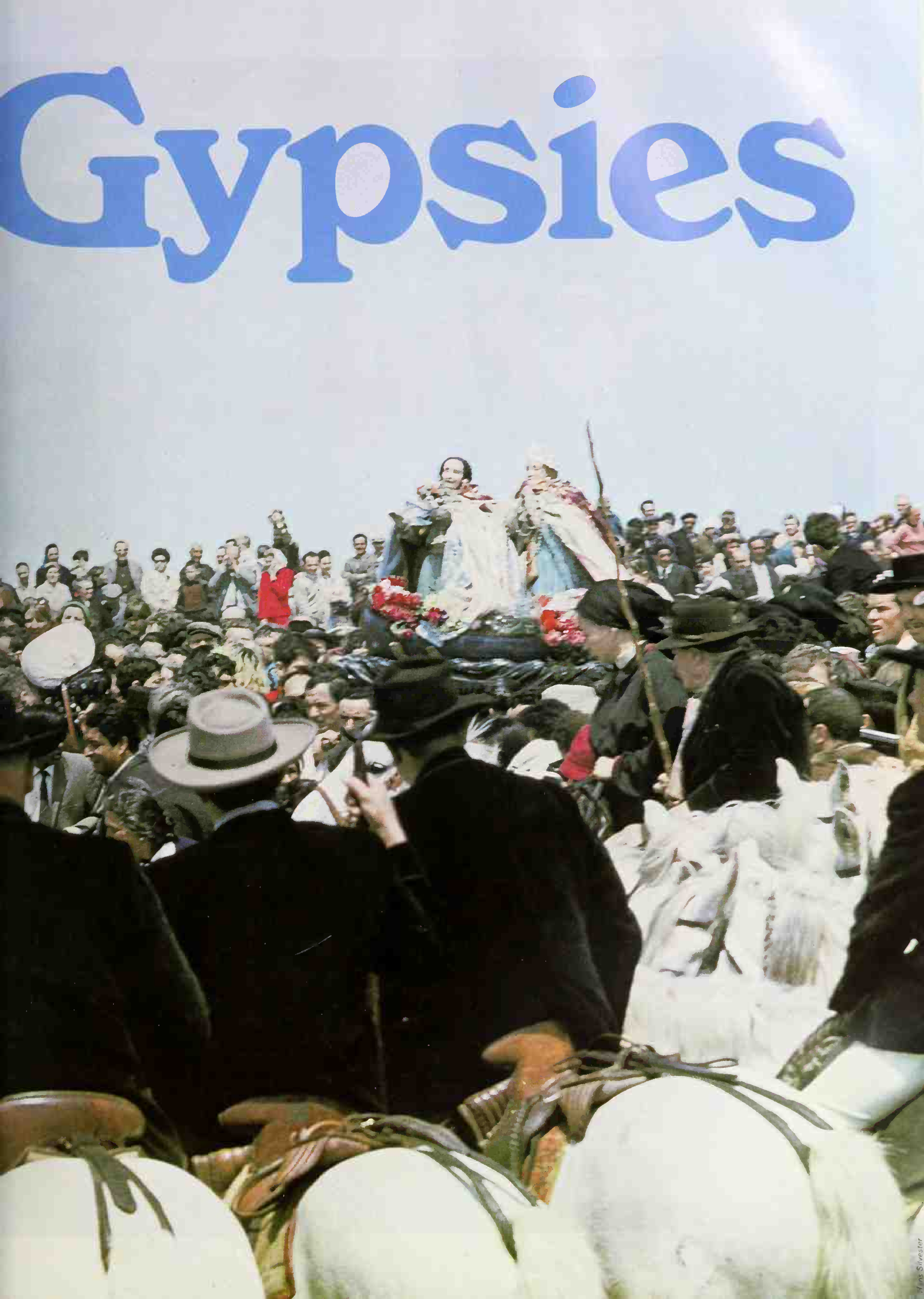
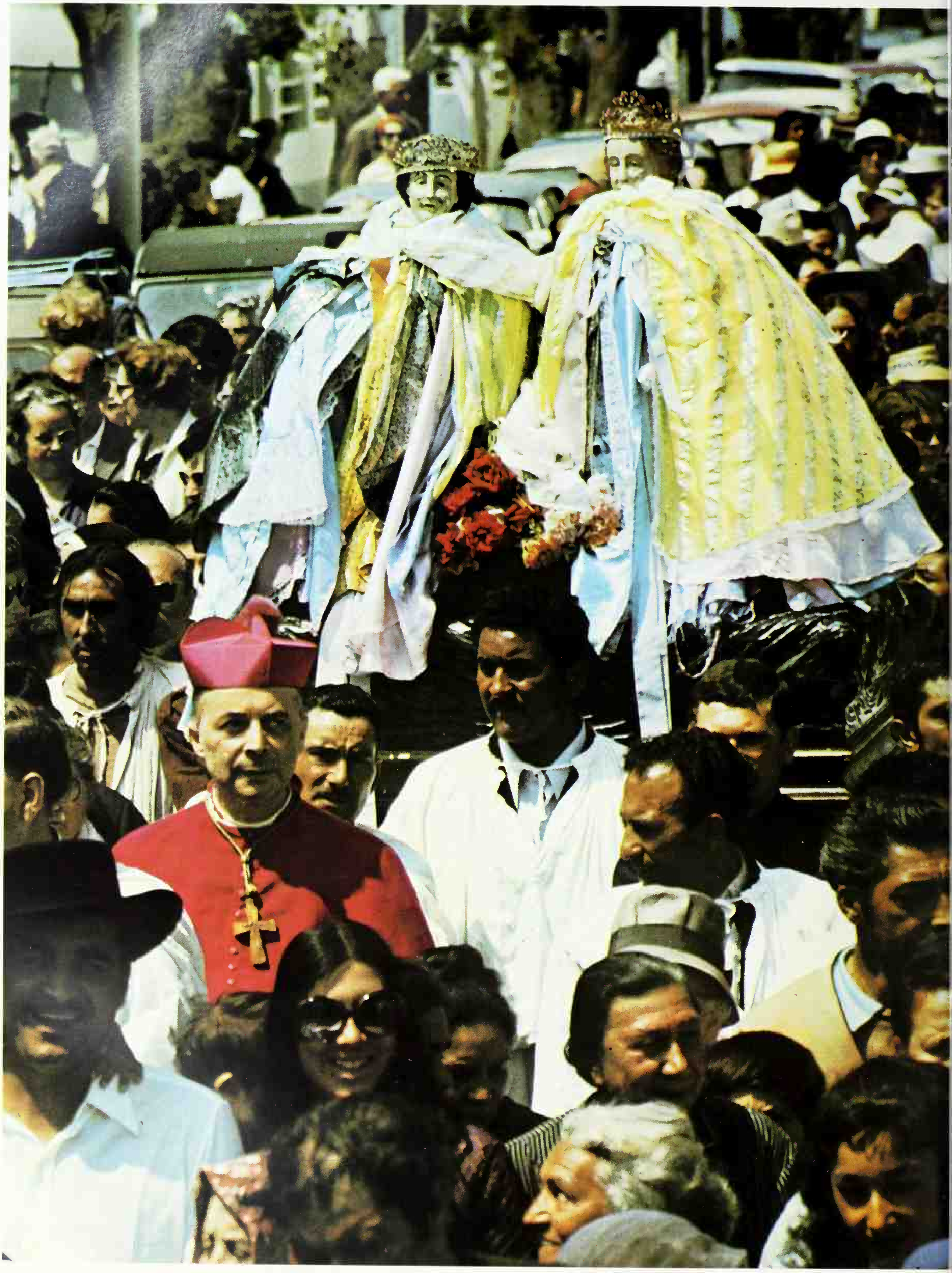
Gypsies



ns Silvester



There is a legend that the gypsies are the descendants of Cain, cursed and doomed to be fugitives and vagabonds

Fortune telling and the provision of charms, ove potions and herbal remedies are part of he gypsies' stock in trade. Distinctive myths, beliefs and ceremonies preserved hrough their wandering existence help to set hem apart from the rest of society

MOST PEOPLE fear gypsies. Their manners are strange, their customs outlandish, heir nomadic way of life at odds with he conventions of settled societies. But ear is often tinged with a kind of fasination. Countless painters, musicians nd writers have had their imagination tirred – and some of their public have had their heads turned – by romantic notions about gypsy weddings and blood brotherhood, scenes of passion to the sound f violins, moonlight, mystery and magic, ortune telling, divination and secret powers.

Somewhere between the extremes proected by this romantic image and by the isenchanted view of landowners and gamewardens who find their coverts raided and heir land fouled and littered (often by on-gypsy travellers) lies the truth about he gypsies: that they are indeed an utlandish people, who in the course of heir history have preserved and someimes perhaps acquired beliefs, customs nd traditions which are paralleled in many ultures. Some of these probably date ar back into antiquity, others have ertainly been modified during the gypsies' enturies of wandering.

One of the difficulties in reconstructing hese wanderings is that the gypsies are virtually an illiterate people. A degree of iteracy has been forced upon them in recent imes as a condition, for instance, of obaining the licences for the cars which nowadays often tow their caravans, but heir society is essentially an oral rather han a literate one. And being nomadic the gypsies have not left behind archeological evidence of settlement, cultivation, artefacts and gravegoods.

n May each year gypsies gather from all over Europe at the Mediterranean fishing village of Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, where accordng to legend the 'Three Marys' of Christian radition took refuge with their servant Sara la Kali (the Black), patroness of gypsies. Their mages are carried in procession (*previous page*) and are dressed in bright robes for the occasion (*left*): on the left is Sara la Kali, on the right Mary Magdalene

Apart from a few documentary references in European archives from the 14th century onwards, their history is preserved in their own oral traditions and legends, not in written records; legends and traditions which are often seemingly at variance with one another. The same is true of their customs and beliefs, whose systematic investigation and study is a comparatively recent, and as yet uncompleted, exercise. Investigators find that gypsies are as likely to be reticent, or deliberately misleading, about these subjects as they are about their past journeys or future movements. But enough headway has been made for a general account to be given of gypsy life, customs and beliefs though these vary from group to group and family to family.

There are four main groups of gypsies in Europe: the Kalderash, mainly coppersmiths and tinsmiths based in eastern and central Europe; the Gitanos, centred in the Iberian peninsula, North Africa and the south of France; the Manush or Sinti in France, Germany and northern Italy; and the British gypsies who are probably of mixed Kalderash and Sinti stock. Great numbers of gypsies are also found in Asia, as well as in New Zealand, Australia and America.

Most American gypsies are of Kalderash or Sinti families. Early large-scale immigrations came from Britain. In later years gypsies have drifted to America from all over Europe; many hundreds of Serbian and Balkan families came at the time of the First World War. In the 1920s the author Irving Brown estimated some 50,000 gypsies in the United States. A more recent estimate, in 1962, placed nearly 5000 gypsies in New York, nearly 10,000 in Los Angeles – cities where the gypsies tend to congregate during the winter.

The word 'gypsies' derives from the self-bestowed title of 'Dukes' or 'Lords' of Egypt (sometimes Little Egypt) by which they were known when they appeared in Europe. Advance bands had no doubt infiltrated before the first recorded appearances – in Greece and the Balkans towards the middle of the 14th century; in Central Europe, Italy and France in the first quarter of the 15th century; in Spain and probably England and Wales, in the middle of the century; certainly in Scotland, Scandinavia, Poland and Russia by the end. They were, however, not of Egyptian origin, though some modern gypsies still repeat the story.

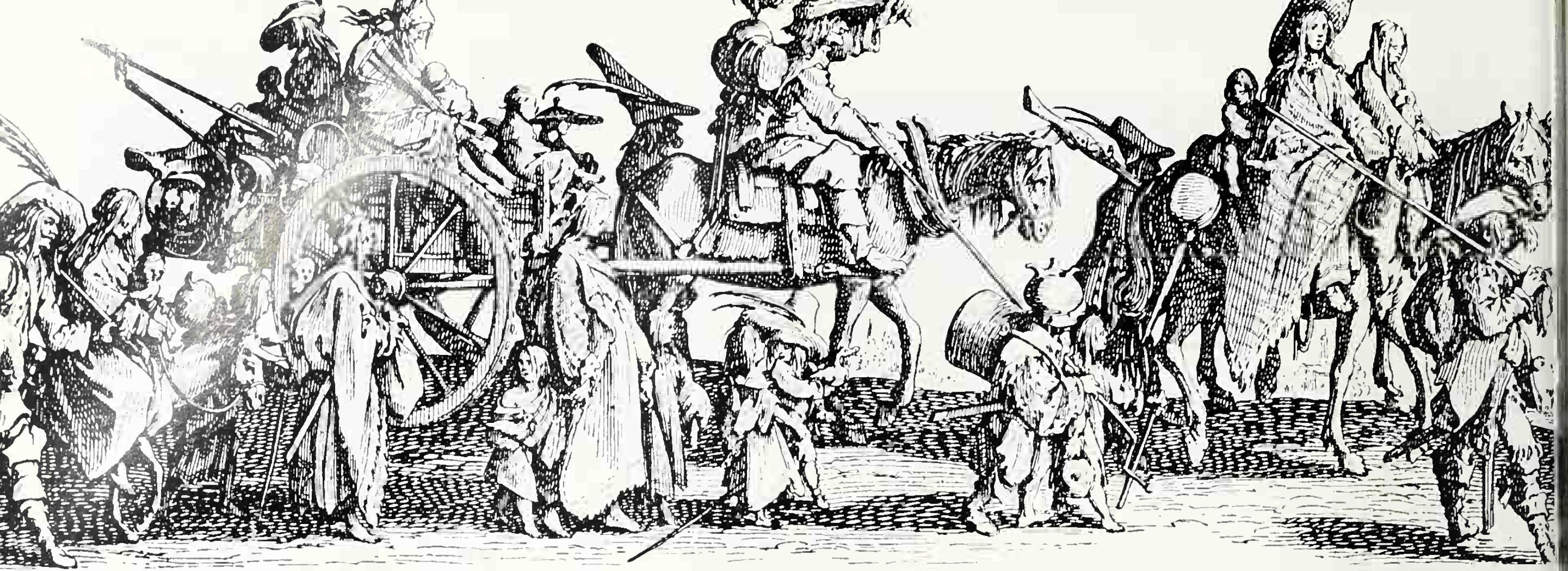
Gypsies repeat other legends also. Some stem from biblical sources, for instance, the story that the gypsies are the descendants of Cain, cursed and doomed to be fugitives and vagabonds; or that they are the descendants of Tubal-Cain, 'the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron', mentioned in Genesis (chapter 4). Christian influences are seen in other legends: that it was a gypsy blacksmith who forged the nails for the Crucifixion and kept or stole the fourth nail; that the gypsies refused to help the Virgin Mary at the flight into Egypt; that as Christ's bodyguard they got drunk and failed to defend him; and in punishment for these sins they have been condemned to wander the earth.

Stories of Creation

But the gypsies also preserve older, pre-Christian myths, some of which may echo man's earliest attempts to explain the universe and the nature of life. In one such myth the earth is called De Develeski, the Divine Mother of all existence, echoing the Sanskrit *deva* meaning 'celestial being'.

The creation of mankind and the personification of the principles of good and evil appear in another myth which shows parallels with the account of the creation in the book of Genesis. On the earth one day appeared o Del (God) and o Bengh (the Devil), who competed in making figures of clay. The Devil fashioned them in the shapes of man and woman, and God breathed life into them. These were Damo and Yehwah, Adam and Eve. One gypsy myth tells that their clay became flesh only when they were touched by the branches of a pear tree and plum tree growing beside them. Adam ate a pear; the serpent tried to prevent Eve from eating an apple, but was stopped by God – a reversal of the story in Genesis – and the fruits aroused their sexual desire. Adam was soon satisfied, but Eve demanded more; and since then woman has not ceased to crave for love. In this mythical account, in contrast to Genesis, God later made the sun and the moon out of the earth.

Another gypsy myth says that before man



The gypsies began to move into Europe in the 14th century. The mystery of their origin, their romantically nomadic way of life and their supposed magical powers surrounded them with a lasting atmosphere of awe and fear. Gypsies on the march, two engravings by Jacques Callot, early 17th century

was created, Sky and Earth had five sons – Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind and Fog. They all quarrelled with each other and their parents. First Moon attacked his mother, Earth; then Fog and Fire their father, Sky; but without success. Sun was equally unsuccessful in attacking Earth. But Wind rushed at Earth and separated her from Sky. Then Earth banished Wind, Sun and Moon, but let Fog and Fire stay with her. Since then, Sky and Earth have been separate, and their five sons remain in perpetual conflict.

In happy contrast with the guilt-laden Christianized legends about the origins of the wandering exiled gypsy race, there is the story that God made the figure of a man out of lime and baked it in the oven. But he forgot to take it out in time. This was the ancestor of the Negroes. Next time he erred on the safe side, and that was the ancestor of white men. But the third time he baked a nicely browned man, and he was the ancestor of the gypsies.

A tale which hovers on the borderland between myth and legend recalls the spurious Egyptian origin of the gypsies. The Pharavono made war on the Horachai (Turkish and Jewish Christians), and having blasphemed were swallowed up by the sea. Only a few escaped, and their descendants, having neither power nor country, State nor Church nor writing, are the underprivileged gypsies of today.

Facts, however, as opposed to fancies, point to an Indian origin for the gypsies. Various other hypotheses of their descent have been advanced in the past, ranging from Nubian and Abyssinian to Assyrian, Chaldean and even Jewish origins. But linguistic evidence provides a safe guide. Although Romany, the gypsy language, has developed several varieties amongst the main branches of gypsies, it clearly belongs to the Indo-European family of languages and is descended from Sanskrit. About half its primary vocabulary (the words for numbers, parts of the body, and basic nouns, verbs and adjectives) is closely connected with the languages and dialects spoken today in northern India, while many grammatical forms follow Sindhi and Hindi patterns. Onto this basic stock have been grafted words from various Near Eastern and European languages, which reflect contact with these cultures as the gypsies migrated and eventually developed sub-cultures. Work still remains to be done on the way in which different European languages have modified the linguistic structures of the various Romany dialects.

Sara the Black Virgin

Gypsies are on the whole deeply religious. But it is interesting that their religion seems to operate on two separate planes. Gypsies share the religious observances of non-gypsy groups, but also have special rituals of their own. These reveal parallels with the observances of other ethnic groups of eastern origin.

As part of the process of accommodating to the various societies in whose midst they live, gypsies have adopted at various times and in various places Mohammedanism and Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, and have even joined special sects like the Methodists and Lutherans. The Church is normally called in for such ceremonies as baptism and burial; but non-Christian rituals on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths are also observed, and clearly play a major role in the religious life of the gypsies.

This is true even on formal occasions of Christian observance, as when Catholic gypsies go on pilgrimages. The best known is that to Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the Camargue region of France, where there is a special cult of Sara la Kali (the black). In Catholic tradition she was the black servant who accompanied the three Marys (Mary the sister of the Virgin, Mary the mother of James and John, and Mary Magdalene) when they were transported to France. In gypsy tradition she was a gypsy woman who had visions of their arrival and helped them to reach land. The pilgrims keep vigil before a statue of Sara in the church crypt. Medallions and photographs of the sick or absent are pressed against the statue and votive offerings of kerchiefs and rags hung around it – a practice which recalls the Dravidian custom in Indi of purifying the clothing of the sick b hanging it on a sacred tree. (Irish tinker are also known to place rags and coins i certain trees for luck, but any connectio between these customs remains speculative.) Later the gypsies leave the churc and go in procession to the sea where the totally immerse themselves.

Icons and holy pictures are often seen i gypsy caravans, Sara the Black Virgi appearing alongside the Virgin and th Sacred Heart of Jesus. But the consolation of the Christian religion are not enough Belief in demons, witches and supernatura creatures is rife, and at life's crise recourse is had to older rituals whic Christians and sceptics might term pagan o superstitious.

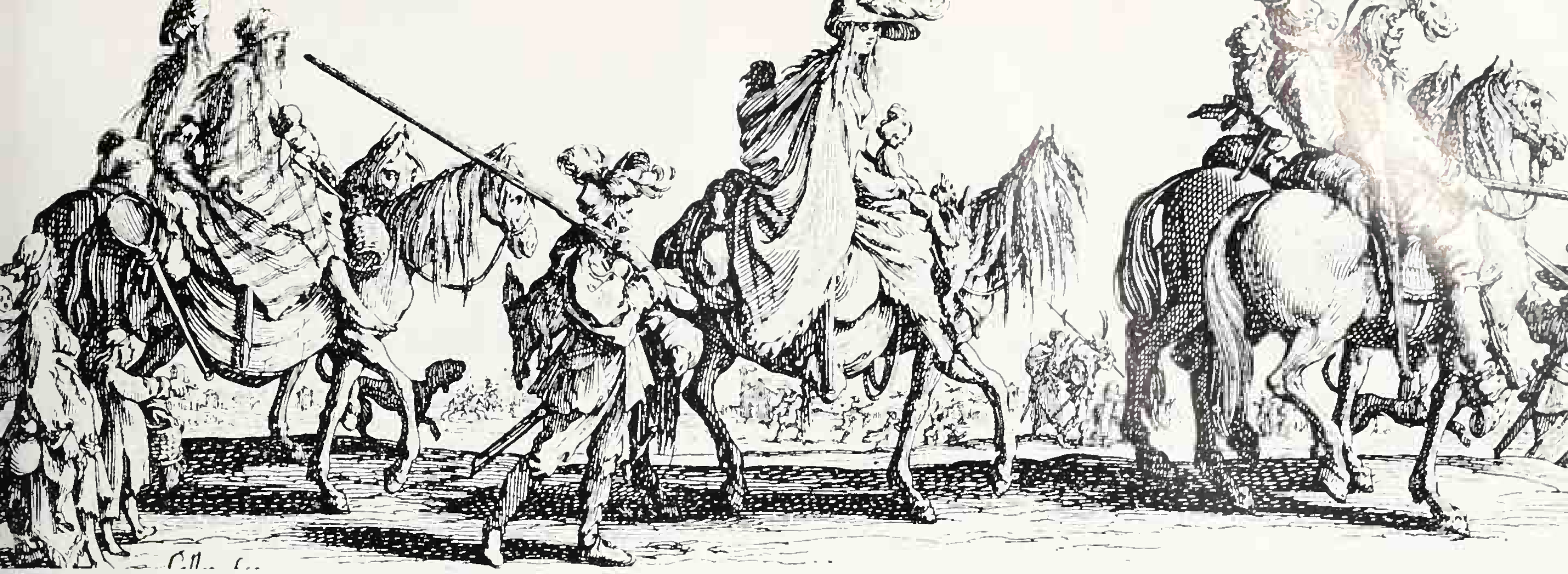
A man or woman is a gypsy by right o birth. Anyone who marries outside th gypsy race loses caste: neither he nor hi children remain true gypsies. The adoption of a non-gypsy as a blood brother despite popular notions, is extremely rare nor does it seem that such a person i regarded as in all respects fully a gypsy.

The family unit is all-important. Property, apart from personal accoutrements belongs to the family, not the individual; and although traces of a matrilineal kinshi system have been found, amongst eas European gypsies in particular, the fathe is the head of the family and, in extended family systems, 'king' of his tribe. Bu much respect is also paid to the mother's and grandmother's authority.

Gypsy Weddings

Traditionally, betrothals and marriage are arranged and a bride-price is asked though this practice is nowadays declining So are the practices of marriage by 'rapt' carrying the girl off, and its conventionalize substitute, abduction with consent o 'runaway' marriage, when the boy runs of with his girl and some weeks later brings her back to her parents' camp, where mock reprobation is heaped on the couple before they are eventually forgiven.

Marriage ceremonies vary. Today many young couples go to priest, minister o registrar, but the traditional gypsy rites are usually enacted also, civil ceremonies customarily following the gypsy rites as i in confirmation of the marriage. Bride and



Mary Evans Picture Library

room hold hands or have their wrists tied ith ribbon, while the head of the family reaks bread, sprinkles it with salt and ives a portion to each. These portions re then exchanged and eaten. The family east may last two or three days. Among panish gypsies proof of defloration is ometimes obligatory.

Fidelity in marriage is strictly enforced, hough divorce and remarriage are admitted. Vhile gypsy prostitutes are not unknown, hey tend to be despised, as do unmarried irls who lose their virginity. Sexual jealousy s strong. An adulterous wife is commonly unished by having her hair shaved off; a nale adulterer is more likely to have his life nade miserable by continuous upbraiding n the part of his wife and female relatives.

The lurid tales of promiscuity to be met ith in romantic literature about gypsy life ave little basis in reality. Modesty is bligatory, as may be seen from the ankle-ength dresses worn by the women and the act that married women usually have their rms covered except when working at such asks as washing-up. But modesty, like eauty, is in the eye of the beholder. For ypsies in general the breasts have no rotic significance: a gypsy mother will feed er baby in public quite unselfconsciously.

It is often remarked that gypsy women ear their children with the minimum of fuss nder a hedge, and a few hours later go on heir way as if nothing had happened. This eeds qualification. Admittedly the active utdoor life keeps gypsy women's muscles in ood trim, and labour is often easy and uick. But few would choose to travel on at nce unless compelled to by hostile landwners or the application of vagrancy laws.

Secret Name

ypsy births entail their own special bservances. Men are banished from the cene, for a woman in confinement is unlean and, for instance, may not prepare ood for some weeks after the birth. Before abour starts, all knots in her clothes must e undone to encourage an easy birth – an xample of imitative magic. To avoid olluting the caravan or tent, the woman nust give birth outside it. If the weather is ad, she may take shelter under the van or special tent may be erected.

Baptism is usually conducted twice: firstly y total immersion, when the child is named within the gypsy tribe or family; and secondly according to the rites of the Church, when a name for official use is conferred. There are reports of yet another secret name being conferred by the mother in a whisper at the moment of birth. This is explained as a device to mislead evil spirits who, not knowing the child's true name, will be powerless to harm it – an ancient and widespread magical belief.

As in birth and marriage, gypsies operate on two religious levels in the face of death. Burial according to the forms of the Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant Churches is normal, though even here special features are to be found. But there are also other, specifically gypsy rituals to be observed.

A dying gypsy is customarily taken outside his tent or caravan, often into a death tent erected for the last hours. He is dressed in his best clothes, usually with new boots. After death the male relatives keep vigil over the body until it is placed in the coffin. Certain articles are commonly placed close to the body – a sod of turf on the chest, personal possessions such as the deceased's knife, fork and drinking mug, and perhaps a tobacco pipe or violin, or harness and corn. A woman's personal jewellery is buried with her if she has no daughters of full gypsy blood to inherit it. The relatives file past and drop amulets or coins into the coffin, which is normally pierced with holes on the lid and at each side of the head. Thus prepared for his final wanderings in eternity, the gypsy is buried according to the rites of his Church.

The Gypsy's Violin

Whatever his occupation may be, the Gypsy knows how to play the violin, and cannot live without this instrument. Gypsy legends have not failed to relate the miraculous origin of the violin . . .

There lived formerly in a forest a young girl, with her father, mother and her four brothers. The beautiful Mara was in love with a foreigner (a non-Gypsy) and, in spite of her beauty and powers of seduction, she did not succeed in attracting the glances of the brave *gadjo*. Whereupon she had recourse to the Devil. The latter, only too willing, promised to help her, but on condition that she betrayed her four brothers to him. Of these he made four strings, and of the father a sound-box, and next her mother, of whom he made a bow. From the five souls that were sold was born the violin. Mara learnt to play it, and the music soon fascinated the hunter who no longer resisted the beautiful girl's charms. But the Devil, always dissatisfied, suddenly reappeared and carried them both off. Only the violin remained on the ground abandoned. One day a poor Gypsy who was passing picked it up, began to caress it, and set out from village to village bringing laughter and tears.

Jean-Paul Clébert
The Gypsies

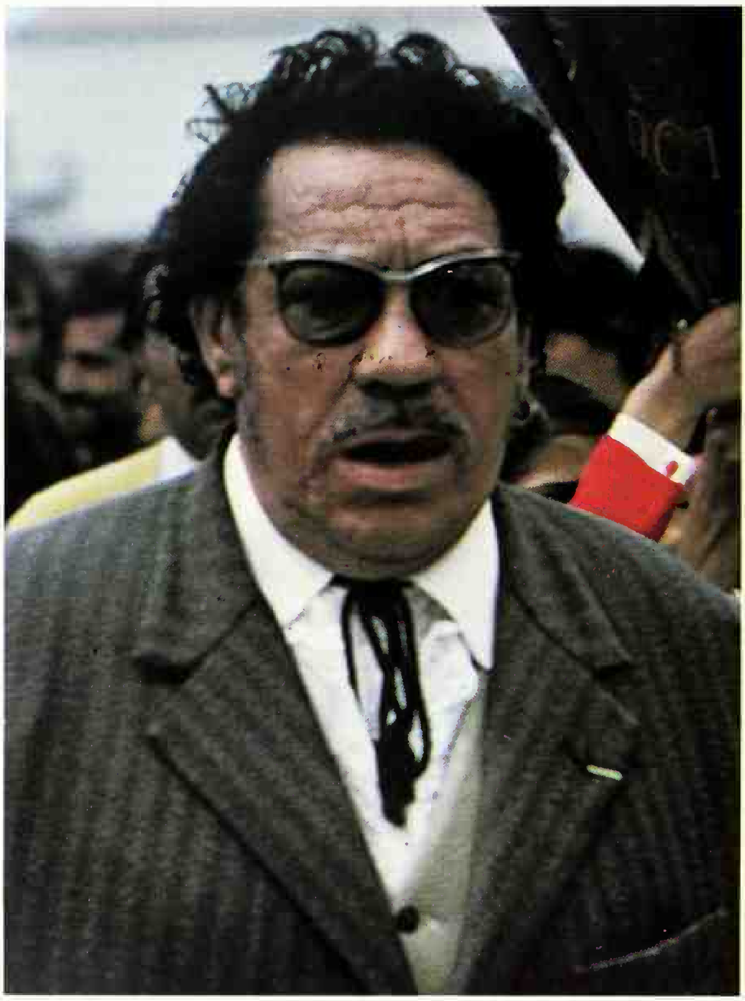
Ritual Destruction

By traditional custom his caravan or tent is then destroyed by burning and its ironwork hammered out of shape and buried. Family property such as china and ornaments are first removed; but if the children have married outside the gypsy race then this is destroyed too. In the past the deceased's horse was slaughtered and buried – a ritual which recalls that of the nomadic Scythians of antiquity – but nowadays it is usually sold to a non-gypsy. In Britain, at least, this is often the fate of an expensive modern caravan. By this means any ill-luck, or haunting of the van or horse by the spirit of the dead, is diverted from the gypsy community to non-gypsies.

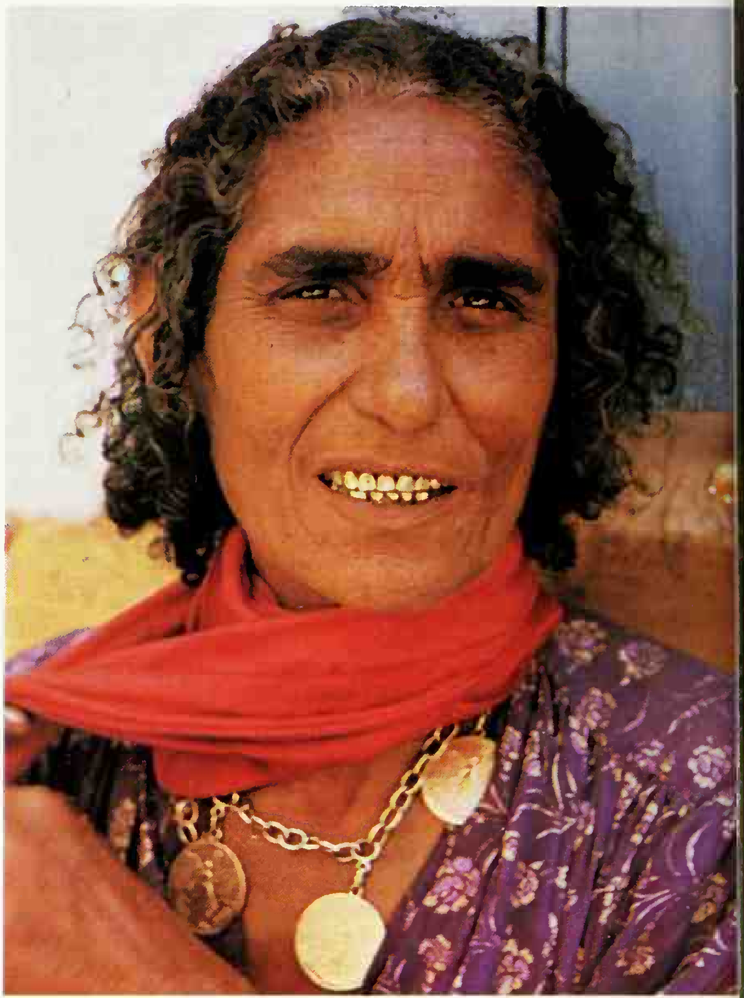
The ritual destruction of horse and van is so important that it is sometimes carried out symbolically, for instance, by placing on the coffin wreaths of red flowers formed in the shapes of horses and vans (red is a common mourning colour amongst gypsies). In 1965 an English gypsy woman's coffin was bedecked with wreaths in the shapes of a dog, a bird-cage, matches and cigarettes, a chair, a cushion, a cooking-tripod, a boar's head and a horse collar – all articles prized in life and likely to be appreciated on the last journey.

Some of the commonest and oldest themes of folklore underlie these observances. Such themes include fear of the malevolent return of the dead; fear of their jealousy if their possessions are enjoyed by the living; propitiation of the spirits; and provision for their sojourn in the other world.

Remedies for rheumatism, aches and pains are peddled in exchange for crossing a palm with silver



Berno P. Cardinal



Left **A gypsy 'king', head of one of the triba groups** ***Above*** **This gypsy carries her gold round her neck and within her head; when a gypsy woman dies her jewellery is buried with her, a continuation of the very old and widespread custom of providing the dead with 'grave goods' for the next life** ***Right*** **A Turkish gypsy showman wrestles with his tame bear. Itinerant bear-leaders in the Balkan area were commonly gypsies, and the bear is a popular figure in gypsy folklore**

As a nomadic people, gypsies are skilled food gatherers and trappers. Wild fruits and berries, fungi, many kinds of small animals and birds, and to a lesser extent fish, feature in their diet. If hedgehogs, squirrels and even rats are acceptable meats, however, certain others are strictly forbidden. There is a dietary prohibition of the flesh of horses, dogs and cats. Dogs are regarded as unclean by many gypsies, who refuse to drink water from a stream where a dog is drinking, but happily drink the same water as their horses.

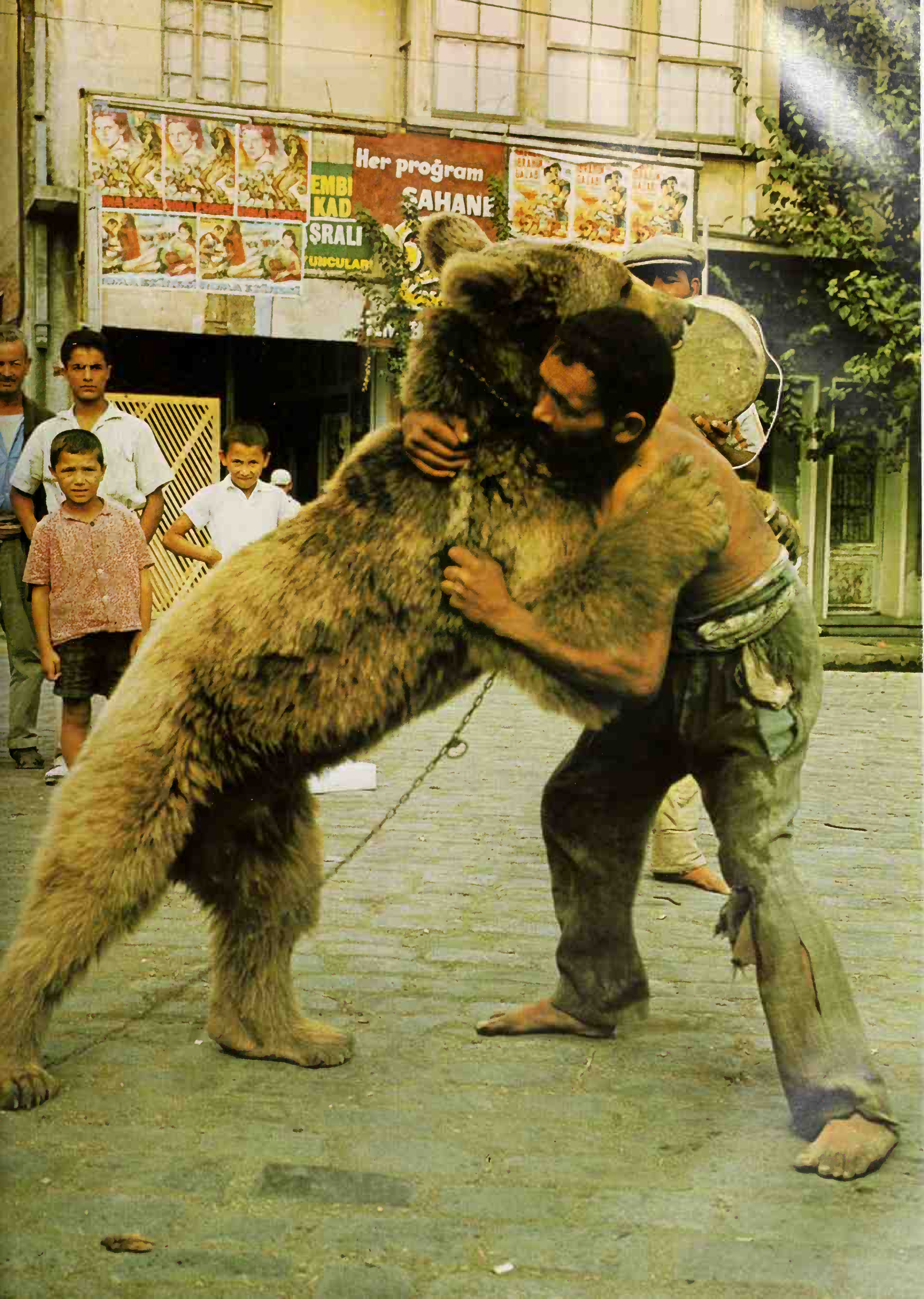
In many gypsy groups there is a prohibition against washing dishes in the same basin that is used for washing clothes or the person. As one might expect of travelling folk whose water supplies are limited, personal ablution is sparing and not popular.

Wild herbs, including garlic, add savour to gypsy cooking and are also used medicinally. As is commonly found in folk medicine, the medical lore of gypsies is a strange medley of magical rites and the physical administration of various herbal and animal brews, some of which are effective.

'Cross My Palm With Silver'

The gypsies often use their traditional knowledge of herbal remedies to impress and even exploit non-gypsies. Remedies for rheumatism, aches and pains, are peddled in exchange for crossing a palm with silver, while means of producing an abortion, of unproven reliability, are also offered to gullible housewives. The demand for love potions and aphrodisiac preparations is also catered for; these are generally used in conjunction with charms and incantations.

The extent to which gypsies themselves believe in the efficacy of all this is open to question. It is a question they perhaps do


Her proğram
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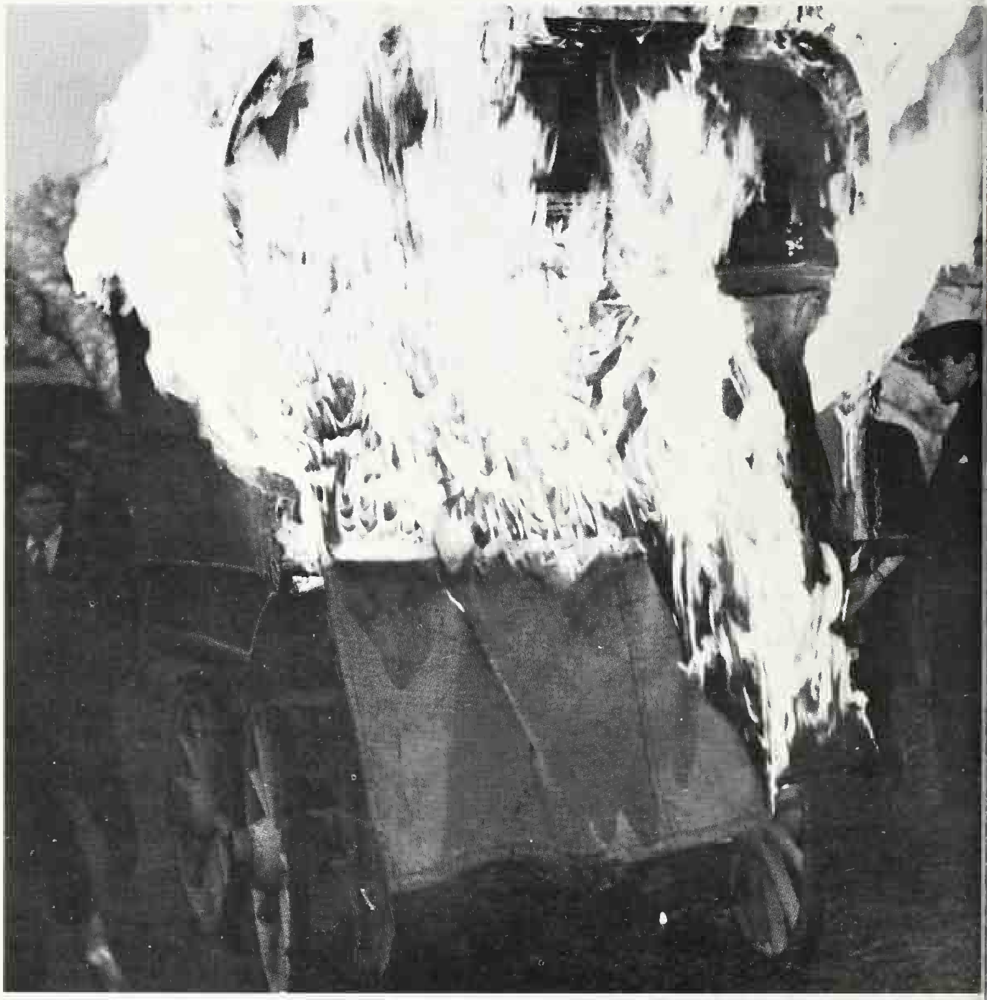


Right A candle is lit by a gypsy in front of the statue of Sara la Kali in the church at Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer; Sara is a popular object of gypsy devotion **Below right** At a gypsy funeral the dead woman's caravan is set alight according to custom; the two horses would be shot

not ask of themselves, and one, if put by an outsider, to which they could hardly be expected to give a straight answer. But on balance it would appear that gypsies are in this respect like the members of other traditional communities: only the most sophisticated – and therefore untypical – would doubt or disbelieve.

Gypsy folklore encompasses belief in many kinds of supernatural events, powers and creatures. Tales are told of witches and vampires, demons, fairies and ghosts. As a consequence of these beliefs, various kinds of magic are used either to circumvent evil forces or on occasion actually to inflict ill upon others.

From their first appearance in Europe, these nomads with their strange language, secret signs and mysterious ways impressed themselves on their hosts as sorcerers and magicians. No doubt the use of the *patrin*, or sign language, by which information about a household is left by one gypsy family for another, contributed to the notion that gypsies had occult powers and supernatural perceptions. They were not, and are not, slow to exploit this, especially in telling fortunes or, when crossed, in trying to frighten the superstitious by invoking curses or predicting ill-fortune. It has indeed been argued that their reputation for supernatural powers is greater amongst non-gypsies than amongst themselves.

In the practice of black magic, gypsy folklore displays the features found universally. Power over an enemy is exercised by gaining possession of hair, nail parings or articles of clothing. Figurines of wax are melted to the accompaniment of curses and spells, or clay figurines are transfixed with pins in order to cause illness or death. Belief in the Evil Eye is frequent.

There are various counter-measures which can be taken against bewitchment. These include the well-known remedy against witchcraft of binding a red thread round the wrist or finger; licking or spitting three times in the eye; and protecting young children by washing them in water which has been run over a knife blade or used to cool a smith's irons.

Amulets and talismans are also much in use, either worn as ornaments or sewn onto the clothes. Magical symbols on these amulets include the sun, moon and stars; zodiacal signs; snakes and other creatures;

nd arrows. The relationship of these ymbols to gypsy and other eastern religions nd mythologies requires further study.

atterns in the Tea Leaves

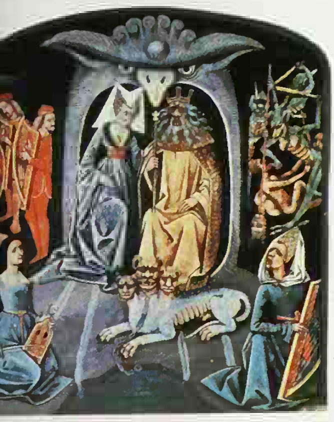
is especially in the arts of divination and rtune telling that the gypsies enjoy high pute. This is entirely a female skill and cupation. The use of Tarot cards (see ARDS; TAROT) is less frequent today than the past but consulting playing cards or tterns formed by tea leaves or scattered eans remains standard practice. Even more equent at fairgrounds is the use, often by actitioners pretending to be gypsies, of e crystal ball for occult vision. Palmistry perhaps the most common method of all.

In gypsy palmistry the various lines on the palm have the usual significance (see PALMISTRY). But in addition, the thumb and fingers play important roles. The thumb is associated with misfortune, the index finger with good luck and decision, the middle finger with death and destiny, the fourth finger with health and liveliness, and the little finger, nicknamed 'the magpie', with theft or the acquisition of goods. Palmistry is used to predict love and lovers, marriage, children, fortune and death, and is almost invariably practised on non-gypsies, a fact which arouses interesting speculations in those with an ironical turn of mind.

The number of full-blooded gypsies – always difficult to ascertain – is dwindling, in common with so many other traditional cultures. Their customs and ways of life are also on the decline, many gypsies tending nowadays to reject them. The systematic recording of these customs is therefore an urgent academic task, for gypsy studies have a major contribution to make to the understanding of human history and development. But one does not need to be either a scholar or a romantic to recognize the colourful contribution gypsies have made to human imagination and the arts.

STEWART SANDERSON

FURTHER READING: C. Nibblelink, *Gypsies* (Green River Press, 1978), see also the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.

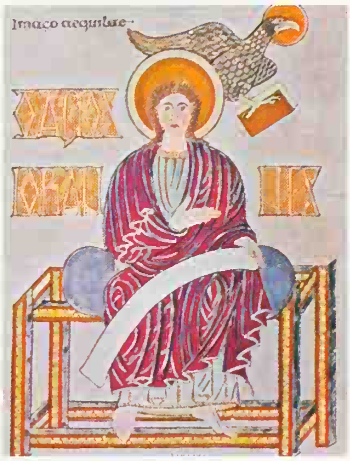


Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Hades

'The unseen', the Greek god of death: later the name of the underworld which he ruled, the home of the dead: later still, another word for hell: feared as pitiless and unyielding, Hades had little cult and was not often represented in art; his queen was Persephone, who spent the winter with him in the underworld.

See DEMETER; EARTH; HELL; PERSEPHONE; PLUTO.



British Museum

Hagiography

Or hagiology, the biographies of saints; one of the earliest is a 2nd century life of St Polycarp; the oldest biographies in English literature are lives of saints in the Anglo-Saxon period, including Adamnan's life of St Columba and Bede's biography of St Cuthbert.

See SAINTS.

nderlying the story of Samson's disastrous ircut is a primitive belief which persists in any parts of the world: that strength, virility d magic power reside in the hair, and to allow to fall into hostile hands is to court danger

IAIR

HE HUMAN HEAD has been associated with numerable rites and taboos arising from common belief that it was the abode of rces of great power (see HEAD). The hair, ecause of its close physical association with e head, was assumed to have magical operties of its own and was surrounded ith its own system of magical rites, devised for the purpose of protecting the head from psychic injury and of protecting those who had the task of dressing or cutting the hair from the anger of the indwelling spirits.

Analogous to this was the superstition that human strength resided in the hair and that cutting it reduced bodily vitality. This is the motif of many folktales, including the biblical story of Samson and Delilah (Judges, chapter 16). Deprivation of hair was always regarded as a dreadful form of punishment, a superstition that was exploited to the full by the penal authorities in the Dutch East Indies who, by threatening to remove the hair of their prisoners, usually managed to secure an immediate confession without recourse to torture.

The belief that the strength of the community might in some mysterious way be bound up with the profusion of its monarch's hair was the reason why the locks of the old Frankish kings always remained unshorn. Communal prosperity might likewise be promoted by a profusion of hair: for instance, in ancient Mexico, girls wildly tossed their unbound hair in ritual dances in honour of the maize goddess, the 'long-haired mother', as this encouraged a luxuriant growth of the maize crop. The same magical principle applied in witchcraft, for a witch could double the power of her spell by shaking her hair loose in the wind.

There is an element of reasoning behind the supposed connection between bodily strength and hair growth: boys and eunuchs are beardless and, by inference, virility must have been equated with the presence of a profusion of hair. This no doubt explains why the cutting of the hair was once considered a violation of Nature and, if imposed by force, a shameful punishment.

Cropping the beard of a defeated enemy has always been one of the most humiliating insults that could be offered him. Shearing the hair of criminals has long been practised not only to ensure easy identification but as an act of degradation, while in the aftermath of war female fraternizers with an enemy occupying force have suffered a similar humiliation at the hands of their compatriots. Shaving the hair as an act of ritual mourning has always represented an extremely abject form of personal sacrifice.

Best Time for a Haircut

A complicated system of taboos and social prejudices therefore surrounded the cutting of hair for thousands of years in communities both primitive and sophisticated. The hair might be cut in accordance with the waxing or waning of the moon, dependent upon how quickly it was required to regrow. Some of the precautions, especially among savages, have been taken to extreme lengths, as in Fiji where the chief of the Namosi tribe used to eat human flesh whenever he had a haircut. The ancient fear that an incautious haircut might outrage Nature had great force among the citizens of ancient Rome, who held it to be one of the major causes of storms. For this reason, many Romans postponed their visits to the hairdresser
until those times when a storm had actuall
broken out. Modern American superstitio
advises against cutting your hair on
Friday or a Sunday, while a belief fro
Washington sees ill luck in shaving o
Monday. Girls should not cut their hair i
March, or it will become lifeless, an
cutting the hair after dark reduces sexualit

From a conviction that cut hair, althoug
separated from the body, continues to b
linked to it by an invisible bond, people i
many parts of the world have been prompte
to dispose secretly of their shorn hair t
prevent it from falling into hostile hand
Sometimes it would be cast into a strea
where it would be borne away out of dange
In ancient Rome the discarded locks of th
flamen Dialis, the priest of Jupiter, wer

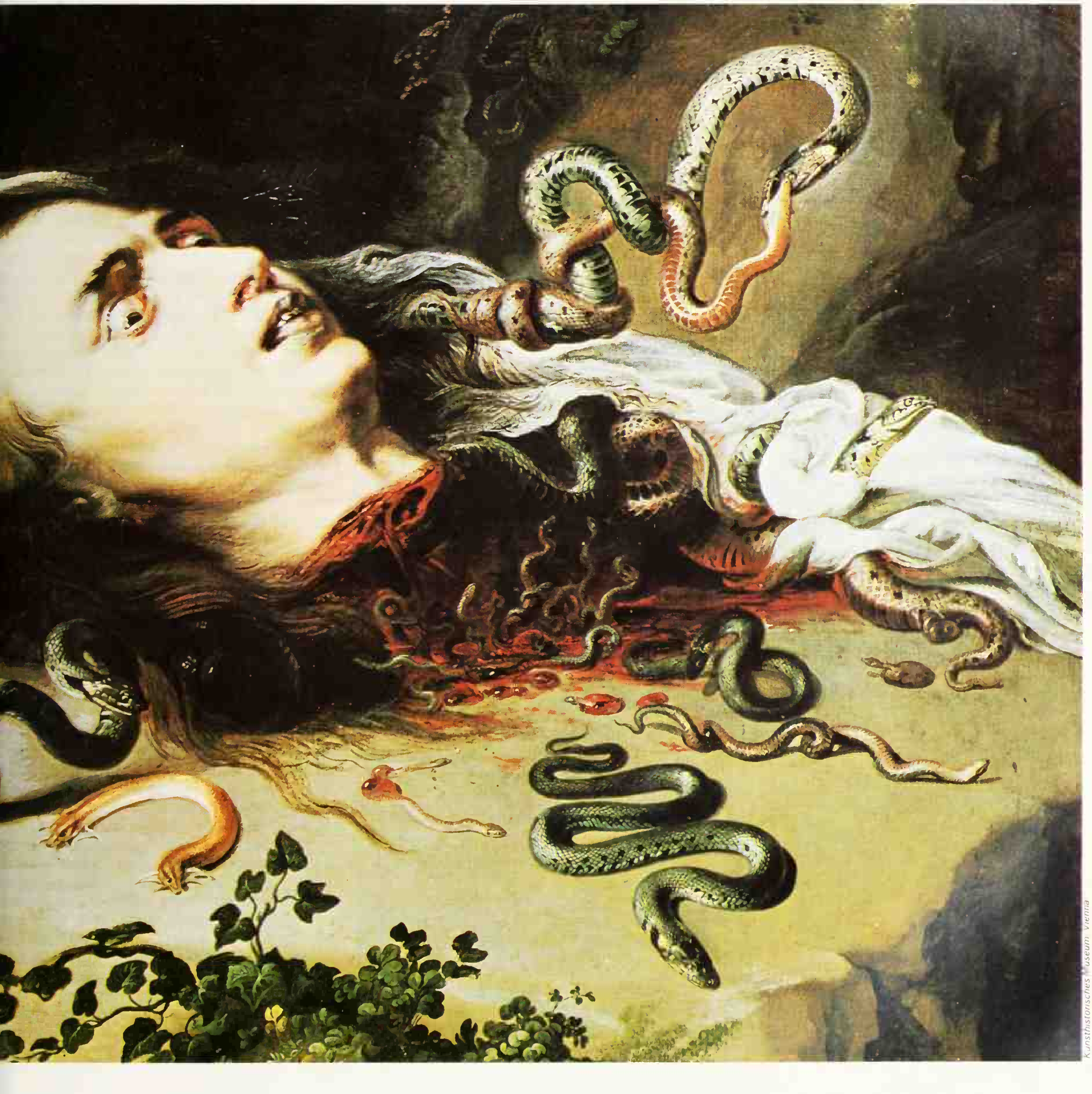
variably buried for safety beneath a magic ee. Even the notorious modern magician leister Crowley was careful to secrete from nemies his shorn hair and nail clippings.

The association between cut hair and the erson to whom it had originally belonged ight be used to the owner's advantage, owever. Included in the magical practices the European witch-doctors known as unning Men or Conjurers was the ritual urning of portions of hair taken from a ctim of a spell, in order to project the ains of fire into the body of the witch; this tion in itself was a diabolical form of counter-magic. And in the Negro 'conjure' magic of the Old South, hairs were crucial ingredients in the deadly conjures placed in a person's path to harm him.

Shaving a Witch

The supposed continuing association between an individual and his hair found further expression in the European superstition that should birds happen to build their nests with discarded hair, the late owner would suffer from severe headaches or even become insane. A number of other bizarre beliefs still survive: the writer of this article was told in all seriousness that a woman who had burned tufts of her hair in the living room fire became ill almost at once. Rural American lore still advises the 'transferring' of an illness by placing some of the patient's hairs into a hole in a tree, tying them to a frog, and so on.

It was one of the strongest beliefs in witch-hunting times that the magical potency of the sorcerer resided in the hair; in consequence, depilation of the witch frequently preceded torture. Once shorn of her bodily hair, it was thought that the most obdurate of witches would become helpless and make the confession required of her. The notorious Inquisitor Jacob Sprenger (see MALLEUS), it would appear, was satisfied with merely shaving the heads of his victims, holding this to be completely effective. Depilation was similarly practised by the Aztecs to neutralize the magical powers of witches and sorcerers prior to their execution.



ne Gorgon Medusa, whose head was struck f by Perseus, had snakes instead of hair: *ead of Medusa* by Rubens

Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

Because of its inherent magical powers and its association with virility, hair was employed for centuries as a charm to lure a loved one; it also played its part in the love philtres manufactured by village quacks. In Ireland an amorous young man would run a hair from the girl of his choice through the fleshy part of the leg of a corpse in order to make his girl-friend 'mad with love'. More common was the gift of a hair bracelet or lock of hair between lovers, which has been described as 'an act of surrender and faith', since according to the laws of magic such a gift gave the recipient absolute power over the life of the donor.

A love charm could rebound somewhat drastically on the head of an unscrupulous lover, however, as the Scottish wizard John Fian was said to have discovered to his cost when he attempted to obtain some of the pubic hairs of a young girl for use in a philtre to make her love him. The ruse being discovered and hairs from the udder of a young cow substituted, the villain found himself pursued all over town by an excessively amorous heifer.

As an index of character fair hair is said to signify timidity, curly hair good temper and straight, lank hair cunning of the lowest order; whilst red hair is regarded as a sign of bad temper. Brown and black hair are thought by many people to indicate bodily strength; black hair is often regarded as a luck-bringer, particularly in the ceremony of the First Foot at New Year (see FIRST).

The hair is also known to respond to the emotional state of the individual, giving rise to the common belief that shock can turn a head of hair white or grey in a single night. There are a number of interesting historical accounts of such cases, notably those of Queen Marie Antoinette and the luckless Damiens, who was fiendishly tortured in public before being torn to pieces between four horses, as a punishment for his attempt on the life of Louis XV of France.

An abundance of hair on the arms is said to portend wealth. Conversely, loss of hair is unlucky, being an omen of loss of children, health and property. Hair growing to a peak in the centre of a woman's forehead, known as a widow's peak, foretells widowhood; in the United States, however, it is considered an extremely lucky sign.

Hair and beard styles, like religious dogmas, have succeeded in dividing mankind into warring camps, the conflicts being resolved less by the clash of swords than by the malicious snipping of barbers' shears. Ever since St Paul issued his famous dictum that 'if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him' (1 Corinthians 11.14), the champions of the short haircut have conducted a relentless warfare against their more hirsute fellow citizens. St Wulfstan Bishop of Worcester in the 11th century became notorious for sudden assaults upon unsuspecting passers-by, whose beards he proceeded to hack with his knife, thrusting the severed tufts into their outraged faces with the command that they shave off the remainder or go to hell.

A Tax on Beards

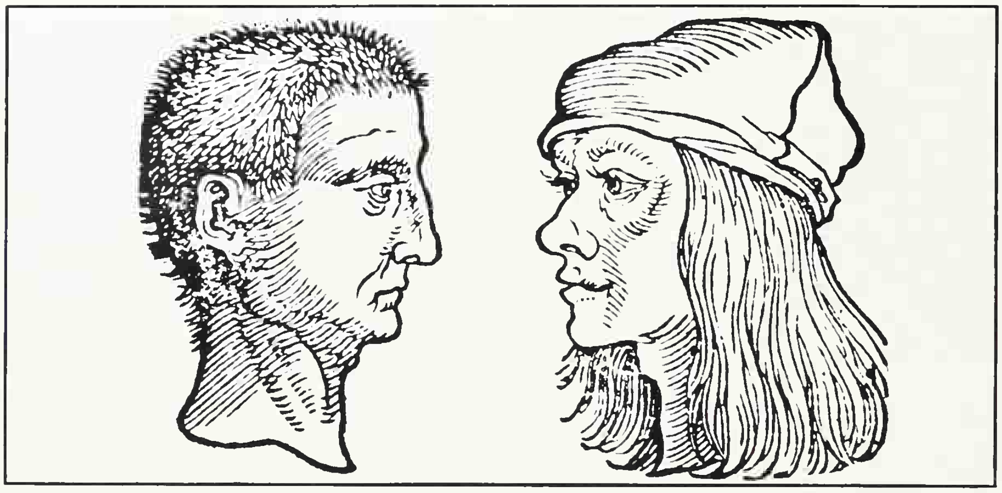
The vanity of princes has influenced tonsoria fashions to an alarming degree. Philip Duke of Burgundy in 1461 compelled 500 of his nobles to sacrifice their hair, for no better reason than that he had lost his own as the result of illness.

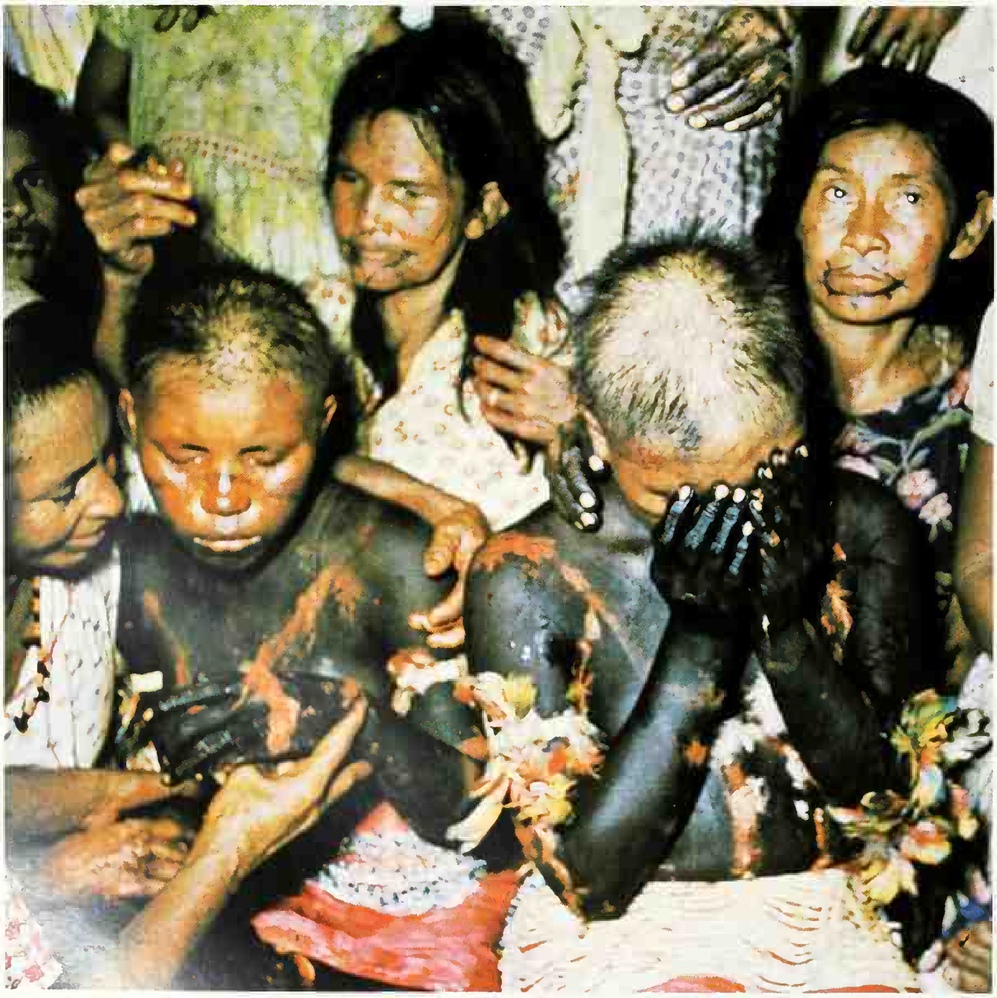
When Francis I of France decided to grow a beard to conceal a scar on his chin the whole male population of his kingdom were ordered to follow suit. Filled with reforming zeal, Tsar Peter the Great of Russia attempted to reduce the vast acreage of hairiness in his dominions by the simple expedient of taxation. Any beard seen in public without an accompanying tax receipt could be hacked off on the spot.

Long hair in men still excites the most violent emotions among otherwise rationa citizens and is assailed as symptomatic of degeneracy and effeminacy, on the assumption that the wealth of the nation and the virility of its male citizens can in some mysterious way be threatened by delaying a visit to the barber. In Syria the long-haired are liable to be jailed, while in Greece recently they have been compulsorily shaved (See also HEAD-DRESS.)

ERIC MAPLE

Top Hair has sometimes been taken as an indication of character: the head on the left, from a 16th century work on physiognomy, shows a typical head of hair of an arrogant character, and that on the right the hair of a weak character *Bottom* Girls from an Amazon Indian tribe have their hair plucked out on reaching the age of puberty



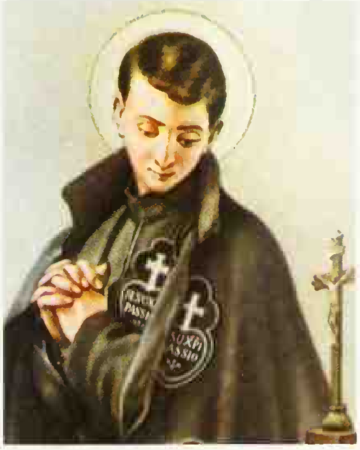


Harald Schultz

Picturepoint, London

Halcyon

Fabulous bird, supposed to breed at midwinter in a nest which floats on the sea; the wind and waves remain calm for seven 'halcyon days' to make this possible; from the Greek word for 'kingfisher'.



Halo

Disc of light surrounding the head or sometimes the whole body of a god, spirit or holy person in religious art; the halo round the head is called a nimbus; the halo round the whole body is an aureole. See DOUBLE.

he power of the thunder god Thor lay chiefly n his hammer, Mjölnir the 'crusher' or 'grinder', ith which he subdued giants and kept mankind n awe

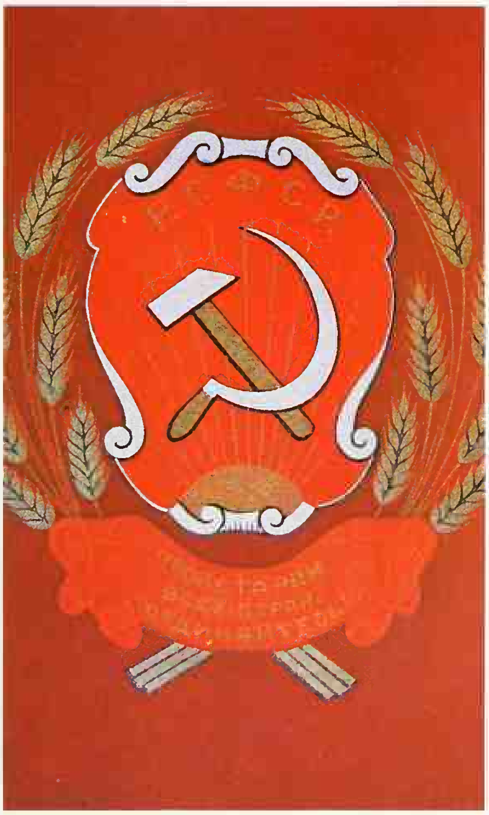
HAMMER

O EARLY CRAFTSMEN, the hammer was an ssential instrument, used particularly in the orging of metal; assuming a wider signifi- ance, it became one of the earliest symbols rawn from technology. In myths it stands or creation and fertility as well as for rdinary physical force: the idea of sexual otency is also sometimes implied. In istorical times, the hammer represents nilitary, political or industrial power.

In the 8th century, Charles Martel, or harles 'the Hammer', the grandfather of harlemagne, inflicted Christendom's ecisive victory over Islam at Poitiers in 32. 'Hammer' was also the name assumed y the Russian revolutionary Molotov. The olsheviks adopted the hammer and sickle s a symbol of the union of the industrial orking class and the peasantry as early as 918, although it was not the official flag f the Soviet Union until 1923. The hammer n that flag specifically symbolizes 'the ower of the working people'.

The Bolsheviks were not the first to ssociate the hammer and sickle. The outhern Gauls had a god who was some- imes represented with a hammer and some- imes with a sickle. The god with a hammer as an important deity in the ancient Celtic antheon. He was often depicted on altars nd a famous statue of him was found t Prémeaux. He was sometimes regarded s an ancestor of the Gauls, and under the ame Sucellus ruled the underworld. He as regarded as a benevolent god, associa- ed with the great Earth Goddess, and his ammer was a symbol of creative power.

In most ancient mythologies there is a od with a hammer. In Greek mythology ephaestus the smith, god of fire, is the son f Zeus for whom, with his hammer, he nakes thunderbolts. At a certain stage in he development of civilization the hammer ecame the supreme symbol of the power of reation, and in one Chinese myth the reator himself is described as having a ammer and chisel in his hands.



The hammer is one of the earliest symbols to be drawn from technology and in the Soviet Union symbolizes the power of the working people: the combined motif of hammer and sickle represents the alliance of the industrial working class and the peasantry

But it is in the Icelandic sagas, the great medieval collections of Nordic poems known as the *Eddas*, that the hammer, in the hands of the thunder god Thor, comes into its own as a mythical object with a proper name, Mjölnir, the 'crusher' or 'grinder'. Thor, the most powerful of the gods, destroyer of giants, was never without his hammer, or the iron gloves he wore to get a proper grip on it, if he could help it. If he ever was deprived of Mjölnir, the best part of his power was lost.

Mjölnir the Murder-Greedy

Mjölnir had been forged by the dwarf Sindri, who made the haft too short. But however heavy the blows Thor struck with it, the hammer never failed him. It would also return to his hands like a boomerang, however far he hurled it. Mjölnir also had the miraculous quality of shrinking in obedience to Thor's will.

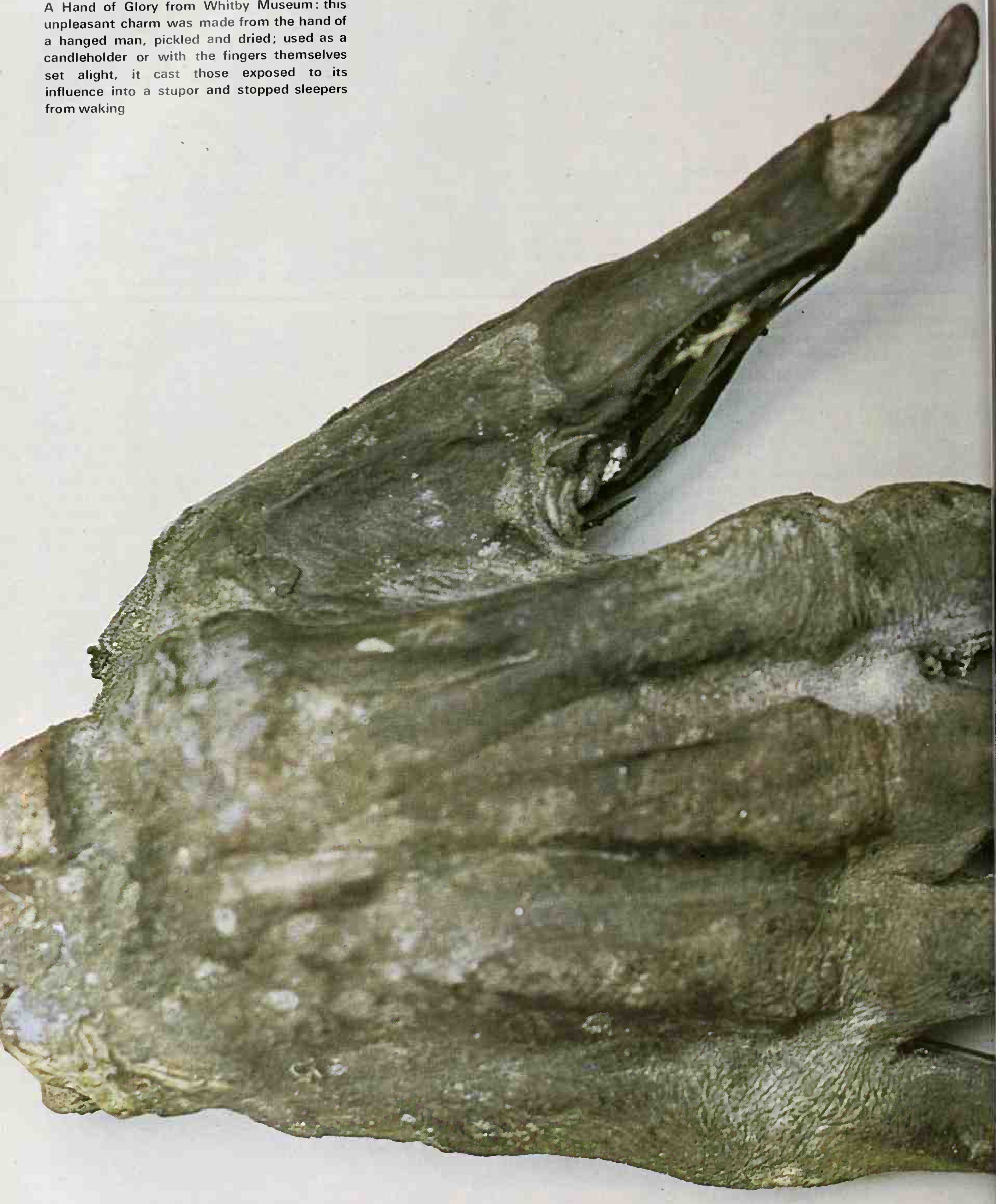
Mjölnir was the terror of both the frost giants and the hill giants, to whom it was known as 'murder-greedy'. The hammer was identified with the thunderbolt: when the ground was struck by lightning, Thor had hurled his fiery hammer down to earth.

In a 10th century saga the story is told how Thor's hammer was stolen by the giant Thrym while he was asleep. Thrym then buries Mjölnir eight miles deep and demands the goddess Freyja for his wife. At the suggestion of the cunning Loki, Thor reluctantly disguises himself as Freyja, putting on a woman's head-dress, necklace, girdle and dress, and goes to the marriage feast, where he astonishes Thrym by eating an ox, eight salmon and all the dainties set out for the women guests, and drinking three huge vessels of mead. When the moment comes to consecrate the marriage, Thrym orders the hammer Mjölnir to be brought and laid in the maiden's bosom, 'that Vor, goddess of vows, might bless both bride and groom'. Thor then throws off his disguise, seizes Mjolnir, and slays not only Thrym but all his companions.

The 'sign of the hammer' was regularly used by the ancient Nordic peoples in the consecration of marriages as a means of bringing fecundity and warding off evil powers. It was also made over cups of liquor at sacrifices, and was believed to heal sickness. When a newborn child had been acknowledged by its father and allowed to live, its acceptance was solemnly confirmed by washing it and making the sign of Thor's hammer over it. These customs survived into the early Christian period in Iceland, and there are incidents in the saga which point to rivalry between the symbolism of Thor's hammer and that of the Cross.

Among some Scandinavian peoples hammers, as a result of the myths about the thunder god, were credited with magic powers. Small hammers were sometimes worn as amulets, and beautifully carved double-headed hammers made of reindeer horn were, along with drums, part of the mysterious equipment of the Lapp Shamans. The Lapps also offered up large wooden hammers, smeared with blood from sacrificed deer, to their thunder god.

A Hand of Glory from Whitby Museum: this unpleasant charm was made from the hand of a hanged man, pickled and dried; used as a candleholder or with the fingers themselves set alight, it cast those exposed to its influence into a stupor and stopped sleepers from waking



HAND OF GLORY

'O MAKE a Hand of Glory, a human hand vas cut from the corpse of a hanged man, nd dried and prepared in a prescribed nanner. It was used as a charm to prevent eepers in the vicinity from waking, so nabling the possessor to carry out robberies vith impunity or, according to another ccount, to stupefy any person to whom it vas displayed and render him or her ncapable of speech or movement. There vere two ways of using it. Sometimes a pecially made candle was fixed in the hand, s in a holder; sometimes the hand itself ecame a five-fold candle, the outspread ngers and thumb being set alight to burn lowly for as long as was necessary. Belief n the powers of this gruesome object was nce widespread in a number of European ountries including England and Ireland, nd tales of its employment by witches, and lso by robbers, are still remembered.

A method of making the Hand of Glory nd its accompanying candle is described in book entitled *Marvellous Secrets of the Natural and Cabalistic Magic of Little Albert*, published at Cologne in 1722. The author's knowledge was apparently gained from hearsay; he tells us that he has never proved the efficacy of the charm for himself but that he had several times been present when sentence was passed upon criminals who confessed to using it in the course of their robberies. The hand, left or right, had to be taken from the body of a felon hanging on a roadside gibbet, wrapped in a piece of winding sheet, and squeezed as tightly as possible in order to drive out any drops of blood that might still remain in it. It had then to be put into an earthenware jar in which it was left for two weeks, together with nitre, salt, long peppers and a mysterious powdered substance known as 'zimat' or 'zimort'. Then it had to be exposed to the sun in the dog-days, or it could be dried in an oven heated by fern and vervain.

A 'sort of candle' had then to be made from the fat of a hanged man, virgin wax and 'sisamie de Laponie'. This last has usually been translated as Lapland sesame; but Grillot de Givry, in his *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy* (1931) [illegible] sesame and 'ponie' as separate ingredients and says that the latter word is of unknown significance today. He suggests that horse dung was possibly intended, since 'ponie' has that meaning in a dialect of Lower Normandy, and horse dung, which burns well if thoroughly dried, would not be an altogether unsuitable material. When the candle was finished, lighted and thrust between the fingers of the prepared hand, the charm was ready for use.

Although witches were supposed to employ the Hand of Glory for their own dire and secret purposes, and were sometimes accused of doing so at their trials, it is the thieves' use of the charm which is most often recounted in surviving stories. By its power they were able to break into houses without fear of discovery. As long as the fingers, or the candle, remained alight, no one already asleep could be roused from his charmed slumber. John Aubrey, the 17th century antiquary, refers to 'a story that was generally believed when I was a schoolboy (before the Civil Wars) that thieves when they broke open a house, would put

Tindale/By courtesy Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society

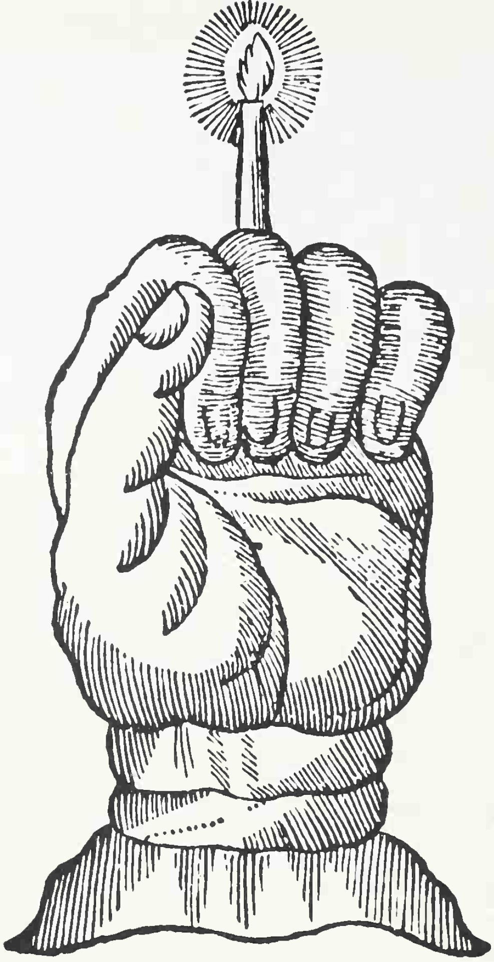
a candle into a dead man's hand, and then the people in the chamber will not awake.'

The same belief evidently existed in Ireland two centuries later. The *Observer* of 16 January 1831 reported an attempted burglary that had taken place some days earlier at Loughcrew, Co. Meath. The robbers took a Hand of Glory with them, 'believing in the superstitious notion that . . . if a candle in a dead hand be introduced into a house, it will prevent those who may be asleep from awaking.' In this case something seems to have gone wrong with the magic, for the householders did waken in spite of it and the burglars fled, leaving the hand behind them.

Quenched Only by Milk

When the dead hand was used by itself, without the added candle, the fingers were lighted at the tips and left to burn like five baleful tapers at the top of the upright hand. If the thumb would not catch fire, it was a sign that someone in the house was still awake and free from the effects of the charm. It was generally believed that the flames could not be blown out by any ordinary person, nor could they be extinguished by any liquid thrown over them, with the exception of milk.

An English version of a story also known in other countries relates how a beggar came one night to an inn (variously located in Yorkshire or Northumberland) and asked for shelter. No bed was available for him, but he was allowed to lie down in front of the kitchen fire. When the household retired to rest, one of the maids, mistrusting the man's looks, stayed up and watched him through a hole in the door. She saw him take a dead hand from his pocket and set it upright in the candlestick on the table. He then smeared it with ointment and lit the four fingers, but was unable to light the thumb. The frightened girl rushed upstairs to rouse the family but was quite unable to do so. Returning to the kitchen, she found that the thief had left it, but the burning Hand of Glory still stood upon the table. She tried to blow out the flames, and then to quench them first with water and afterwards with beer, but they only burned more brightly. Finally she emptied a jug of milk over them and immediately they went out. The spell being broken, the inmates of the house awoke and easily overpowered the beggar, who in due course was hanged. An almost exactly similar tale is told of a band of thieves and a brave servant at Huy, in the Low Countries, and there are other variants elsewhere.


Mary Evans Picture Library

A Hand of Glory holding a candle, made, according to one recipe, from the fat of a hanged man, wax and 'sisamie de Laponie'

The author of *Marvellous Secrets*, having described how the Hand of Glory is made, obligingly supplies his readers with an antidote to its evil powers. The charm will, he says, become ineffective, and thieves will be unable to use it, if the threshold of the main door and all other possible entries are smeared with an ointment specially made in the dog-days from the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen and the blood of a screech-owl.

Hanuman

Monkey god of Hindu mythology who plays an important role in the *Ramayana*, an epic poem about a war between the rulers of India and those of Ceylon; he has many temples, especially in southern India, and is also popular in Japan; the hanuman monkey which bears his name is one of the commonest Indian monkeys.

R. K. Singh

Hara-kiri

Literally 'belly-cutting', vulgar term for ceremonious suicide by disembowelling in Japan; long practised by the Samurai, the warrior class, when in disgrace; one or more cuts were made with a short sword, drawn across the abdomen and turned upwards; sometimes the execution was swiftly completed by a friend or relative who beheaded the victim; the act of hara-kiri, performed with due ritual solemnity, restored the personal honour of the suicide.

Thousands of Indians alive today believe that a remarkable holy man, who was born in 1865, was the promised reincarnation of a saint, and an embodiment of the god Krishna

HARANATH

THE REINCARNATION of Gouranga, the 16th-century saint who was renowned throughout India as an embodiment of Krishna, was prophesied in 1592 by Manohardas Goswami, a Bengali sage. Exactly 273 years later, on 1 July 1865, Sri Haranath was born at Sonamukhi – which means 'Golden Mouth' – in western Bengal, the son of a Brahmin. His disciples believe that he was the reincarnation of the saint and that he came, as he had come before, to distribute *Krishna prem* (divine love) on a vast scale.

It is related that Haranath's father, Jayaram Banerji, while on a visit to Calcutta had a dream in which a *sadhu* (holy man) visited his house at Sonamukhi and requested hospitality of his wife, Sundari Devi. Being overwhelmed by the radiance of the sadhu, she admitted him to a magnificent temple of Shiva which Jayaram had built before leaving for Calcutta. There she served the sadhu devotedly and locked the outer gates of the temple after the evening ritual. Next morning there was no trace of the sadhu, although the temple walls were too high to scale.

So vivid was the dream that Jayaram returned immediately to Sonamukhi and related it to his wife. He was astonished to learn that a sadhu had indeed been received by Sundari the previous evening. Soon after these events, Haranath was born. His unusual life and, later, his appearance, suggested that he and the sadhu were identical.

The saintly Gouranga (or Krishna Chaitanya, as he is sometimes called) had fired all India with his ecstatic chanting of Krishna's name; but his mission had not been wholly fulfilled. Being a *sannyasin* (celibate sadhu) his life was incomprehensible to the mass of the people. Consequently, as the centuries passed his influence waned and a new impulse became necessary. This was initiated by Haranath. He lived the life of an ordinary householder engaged in worldly activities. He married Kusuma Kumari Devi when he was 14 years old, she being nine at the time. Later in life he implied that Kusuma was Vishnupriya, who had been the wife of Gouranga before he renounced all worldly ties to tread the austere path.

Very early in life Haranath is said to have manifested strange powers. His mother would conceal various objects in fun and he would locate them immediately, unerringly, no matter how far from the house she hid them. He frequently went into trances and, while studying for his degree at the Burdwan Raj College, Calcutta in 1889, fell into such profound ecstasies that he could only be aroused with difficulty. He would then roam the Calcutta streets, unconscious of his surroundings. His college days were spent istlessly. He had no real interest in worldly knowledge; his mind was continually being absorbed by a mysterious inner power and he spent most of his waking life in the contemplation of spiritual truths. Because of this he did not pass his B.A. examination, for which he sat three times. With characteristic resignation to the will of Krishna he told a devotee: 'I could not possibly have passed if I had appeared a *akh* (100,000) times more, because no worldly object could then attract me.'

Chanting the Name of Krishna

When not lost in meditation he was busy organizing parties in which the chanting of Krishna's name and the commemorating of Krishna's divine activities were the dominant features.

Haranath earned his living in government service in Kashmir. He raised a family, thereby fulfilling one of the chief duties of a householder according to Hindu thought. But his love was seen to flow out to all beings and his small family soon increased to embrace many tens of thousands in India and other places.

Although living at a great distance from his wife and family during the 20 years of his service in Kashmir from 1893 to 1913, he asked his devotees always to couple her name with his, thus forming the sacred incantation or *mantra* 'Kusuma Haranath'. The full and tremendous potency of the mantra would, he said, be discovered only after his death.

Haranath exercised superhuman powers that affected all kinds of people, many of whom were personally unknown to him. There are cases on record of his conversion of vicious people into saints, of ferocious animals into harmless and affectionate companions. He could leave his physical body at will and travel on the astral plane in order to warn his devotees and friends of impending dangers, saving their lives or enabling them to avoid agonies of mind and body. He had the power of hearing spirit voices and communing with divine beings, of seeing through opaque bodies, and visiting the abodes of Vishnu, Krishna and other gods. He also possessed the power of clairvoyance to a very high degree. He never claimed any of these powers as his own, always referring them to Krishna alone.

Crazy with the Love of God

During the time of his service in Kashmir there were some who recognized him as an *avatar* (direct incarnation) of Krishna, but to the majority of his devotees he was Pagal Haranath, so called because he was crazy *(pagal)* with the love of God. He imparted his mood of divine joy to all, regardless of caste, age, sex or creed. He wrote thousands of letters during his life; they all extolled the efficacy of 'taking name' (repeating a divine name) and showed the way in which Krishna himself could be ensnared by his devotee in the net of love and longing.

Haranath said of the sage Narada, that he gave salvation through his harp; of Krishna, that he gave salvation through his flute; while he claimed his own pen to be sufficient means of salvation in the present age. The first volume of his letters appeared in 1910 under the title *Pagal Haranath*, and it is today the main devotional book of his followers. Like all the letters which flowed unceasingly from his pen, *Pagal Haranath* is steeped in divine love.

Haranath had no equal as a healer, and relieved sufferers by absorbing diseases into his own body. For hours and sometimes days afterwards his body registered the symptoms and agonies of the sufferer; yet he described the sensation as blissful. Such was his overwhelming love for humanity, especially the weak and the vicious, that he was willing to assume all their burdens. The only fee he asked was that they should chant aloud, or repeat mentally, 'any divine name that melted their hearts', such as Radha-Krishna, Rama, Vishnu, Christ or Gouranga. It began to be customary for those he healed or enlightened to repeat the name Kusuma Haranath, and this is still done by multitudes in India and elsewhere today.

Haranath is recognized by many Indians as an avatar, a divine personality whose mission was to initiate a spiritual rebirth among Hindus: he was clairvoyant, had remarkable powers of healing and was said to travel on the astral plane and commune with spirits

The Haranath Mission

Dead for Ten Hours

The most critical experience in Haranath's life occurred in April 1896. He was about to journey from Jammu to Srinagar but on stepping into the carriage he lost consciousness. This occurred at three in the afternoon. He remained absolutely inert until one o'clock the following morning and was given up for dead. His heart had stopped beating, all signs of life had disappeared, and his travelling companions made arrangements for the body to be cremated. During the ten hours of death, however, Haranath claimed to have experienced the most intense interior activity. This included communion with a *Mahapurusha* (Great Being) whom he had seen before as a child of five while out walking with his elder brother. On this first occasion a vast form had hovered over them, as high as a two-storeyed building close by. He had at that time been mysteriously absorbed into the Mahapurusha; now it was the latter's turn to be absorbed into Haranath.

This great being was none other than Haranath's own self – Gouranga; and when he returned to life at one o'clock the following day, the merging had been accomplished. Haranath remained silent about the full significance of this experience. But his complexion underwent a permanent change to a fair golden hue (Gouranga means *the golden one*). Haranath became literally the 'one who spoke golden truths from a golden mouth', as Manohardas had prophesied centuries earlier.

During the period of 'death' it is said that the Mahapurusha dismembered Haranath's body into 64 parts. This he did in order to effect some kind of spiritual regeneration. On reassembling them, three were found to be missing. Haranath urged that these would not be necessary. He was anxious to re-enter the body again, not because he feared death or what might follow, nor because he cared particularly about living in a bodily form, but because of the anxiety which he knew his mother felt at that moment, having become telepathically aware of his sudden 'death'. The Mahapurusha therefore made up the missing parts with 'earthly matter taken from the hills', and Haranath revived.

Haranath left his reconstituted body permanently in May 1927. His followers explain that his devotees had become too numerous for individual attention and he consequently became universal once more so that he could appear to all who needed him, as Krishna himself had appeared to each of his devotees, intimately and uniquely.

KENNETH GRANT

Formerly associated with the moon and reverenced as a holy creature, the hare came to be feared as a beast of ill omen. Witches often took the form of hares to work their mischief, and in this shape could only be killed by a silver bullet

HARE

'NOW WE WILL BEGIN with the hare. And why Sir will you begin with the hare rather than with any other beast? I will tell you. Because she is the most marvellous beast that is on this earth.' So wrote William Twice in his 14th century treatise on hunting.

Marvellous indeed is the hare. As a symbolic figure from the unconsious the hare constantly recurs in dreams, and in world mythology it is closely associated with the moon. It has performed the role of deity and devil, of witch and witch's imp, and for reasons hard to comprehend this most timid of creatures has been regarded by mankind with a mixture of horror and awe.

It was generally accepted that a witch could assume the shape of a hare at will and resume her true form by an incantation. Witches in the shape of hares were notorious for ravaging the farmer's fields and for stealing the milk of cows. They could only be destroyed by a silver bullet – symbol of the moon – fired from a gun. If they were merely injured a search was at once begun for a woman with a similar injury; if such a woman was found, she was often condemned to death.

The Algonquin Indians worshipped the Great Hare, who was credited with forming the earth (see ALGONQUIN INDIANS). In Greece and China the hare was associated with the moon; in the former country it was connected with the lunar goddess Hecate and in the latter with the powers of augury. Buddha in one of his reincarnations took the form of a hare, which leaped into a fire and implanted its image upon the moon.

In pre-Christian Europe the hare was regarded as a symbol of fertility and therefore of the spring. The Romans divined the future from its movements and its sacred flesh was denied to ordinary mortals.

Many people feel an aversion to eating the meat of the hare and there is a suggestion of totemism underlying this objection. But it is possible that it was also based on the rules of magic: it would be extremely dangerous to consume the flesh of so timid an animal for fear that this same timidity would be transmitted to the eater.

The hare was reverenced in Europe as the spirit of the corn, particularly in Germany, Holland, France and Ireland, where the reaping of the last of the corn was known as 'cutting the hare'. Reapers were urged on at their labours at harvest end with the cry, 'We'll put the hare out of it today.'

Many relics of the old traditions of divining the future from the movements of the hare survive in modern Europe. In the British Isles a hare running down a village street is an omen of fire. For a hare to cross the path of a traveller is highly ominous, especially if the traveller is a pregnant woman. In this case it is necessary for a piece of cloth to be torn from her clothing to prevent her from giving birth to a hare-lipped child. Fishermen were known to abandon a day's fishing after a hare had crossed their paths, and under no circumstances could the word 'hare' be uttered at sea. A fatal accident in a mine was thought to be foreshadowed by the presence of a white hare or a white rabbit; this is in itself an interesting example of a superstition originally associated with the hare becoming attached to the rabbit, a later arrival in Great Britain.

The white hare also occurs in ghost lore. A typical example was described by Robert Hunt in his *Popular Romances of the West of England*, in the legend of a betrayed girl who died from grief and returned in the shape of a white hare to haunt her lover.

Melancholy as a Hare

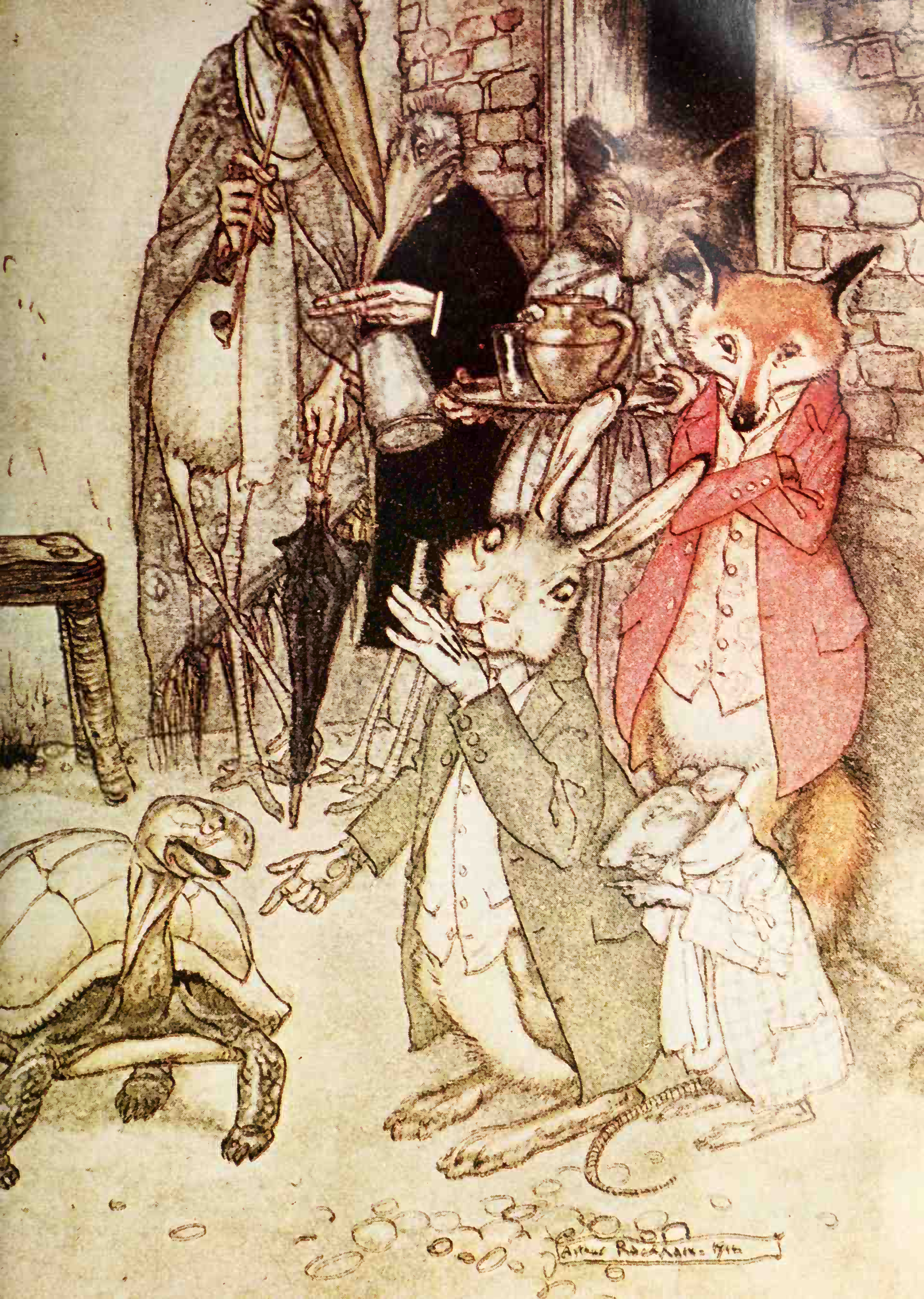
Hares have acquired a reputation for melancholia. Many people shunned the flesh solely from fear that by eating it they would become contaminated by melancholy. The belief that the hare's melancholy increased to the point of madness in the month of March (when this creature is specially shy and wild, this being the mating season) survives in the expression 'mad as a March hare'.

The hare strikes a happier note as one of the symbols of the Easter festival, for it was the Easter hare that laid the Easter egg. The ceremony of scrambling for hare pie, which still takes place on Easter Monday at Hallaton in Leicestershire, however, has undertones of ritual sacrifice.

Possibly the best known surviving reminder of the hare's ancient powers is the custom of carrying a hare's foot as a charm against colic, rheumatism and misfortune generally. It is mentioned in the diaries of Samuel Pepys, who remarked after touching a hare's foot to cure the 'colic', or severe indigestion: 'Strange how fancy works, for I had no sooner handled his foot but I became well and so continue.'

Homer Sykes

Left **Every year on Easter Monday the Hare Pie Scramble takes place at Hallaton in Leicestershire *Right* Illustration by Arthur Rackham of Aesop's fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise: overconfident at the start, the hare loses through his own folly; the hare's weakness of intellect was proverbial**


Arthur Rackham 1912

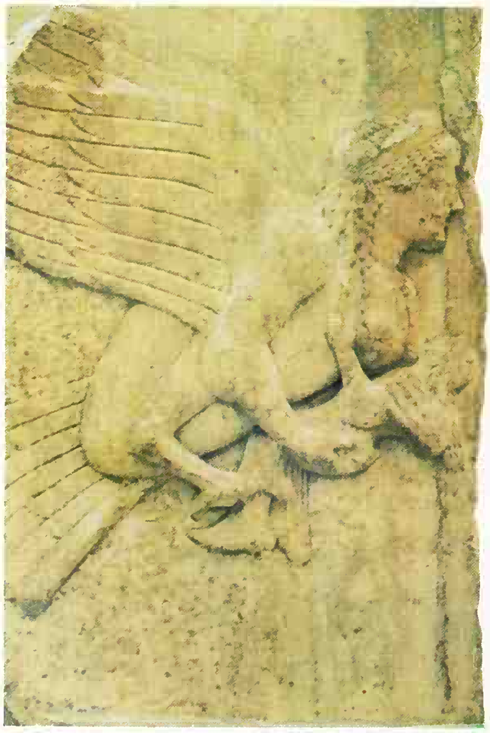
HARE KRISHNA

A COMMON SIGHT in Western cities in the 1970s, from San Francisco to New York, London and Paris, was a small group of young people in saffron-coloured robes, shuffling and swaying to the tapping of a drum and the reedy music of a flute, holding out begging bowls while chanting 'Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Hare Rama Hare Rama Hare Hare Hare.' The young men's heads were shaven and the group, with their faraway gaze, often appeared undernourished. Regarded by many on-lookers as tiresome or deluded, they were in fact the most visible demonstration of the dramatic impact of Hindu *bhakti yoga* upon the West.

Bhakti is the principle of loving devotion to a deity, in this case the god Krishna, revered as the Supreme God, and the *mantra*, or verbal formula, which the group recites with self-hypnotising effect, is intended to induce a profound inner peace (see KRISHNA; MANTRA). The movement looks back to the 16th-century Indian guru Chaitanya as its founder. A holy man and devotee of Krishna, he was given to strange fits and uncontrollable outbursts of sudden weeping, laughing, running to and fro or climbing up trees. He taught that chanting the name of the god and dancing to simple musical accompaniment led to an ecstatic communion between deity and worshipper.

Baba Bharati Premand introduced the bhakti of loving devotion to Krishna to the United States early in the 20th century and founded temples in New York and Los Angeles. The Hare Krishna movement itself was taken to New York in 1965 by the late Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, who founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Prabhupad had his headquarters in Bombay and was believed by his followers to be 500 years old and a reincarnation of Chaitanya. Members lived simply in vegetarian communities, owning nothing, refraining from drugs and alcohol, practising chastity and pacifism. By the late 1980s they were seen less often on the streets and the movement had lost impetus.

C. M. Dixon



C. M. Dixon

Harpies are commonly described as birds with the faces of women, and this is how they are depicted on the Tomb of the Harpies in Asia Minor: they appear to be carrying away evil-doers for punishment by the Furies. With their habit of carrying off people and food, the Harpies are associated with whirlwinds and sudden squalls: they 'keep pace with the blasts of the winds on their swift wings, for they swoop high aloft'

To call a woman a harpy is to imply that she is a fierce, grasping hag. The original Harpies of antiquity were winged monsters with women's faces, who descended like birds of prey to snatch up their victims with long, hooked claws

HARPY

LIKE THE SIRENS, the Furies and the Gorgons, the Harpies were female monsters of Greek legend. They were depicted in art and literature as winged women, or as birds with women's faces and long, hooked claws, and their peculiar activity was to swoop upon human begins, or at least upon their food; their victims were carried off to unknown places. The origin and nature of the Harpies are in dispute, but they seem to have a definite connection with the underworld, having some of the characteristics of ghosts.

Wind and spirit were closely allied in ancient thought (see BREATH), and the Harpies are linked in literature with storms, whirlwinds or sudden squalls such as are very dangerous at sea and damaging on land. They appear first in Homer, where the Harpy Podarge (swift-foot) is mentioned in the *Iliad* as mating with the wind Zephyrus, and giving birth to the two supernatural horses of Achilles, Xanthus and Balius.

In the *Odyssey* (book 1) Telemachus says that Odysseus has been away so long that he must have been carried off by the Harpies 'with no tidings, out of sight'. So too, in her grief, Odysseus's wife Penelope wishes that she had been carried away to the mouths of Ocean by a storm such as swept off the orphan daughters of Pandareus. A legend relates that the goddess Aphrodite, who had been protecting these girls, left them unattended for a period while she interceded for them on Olympus. The Harpies then swept them off and 'gave them as servants to the hateful Erinyes'. Since the Erinyes or Furies belonged to the underworld, the Harpies must have brought the maidens alive to dwell among the dead. This was the fate which Odysseus's family and friends imagined had overtaken the hero.

In Hesiod's *Theogony* two Harpies are mentioned, Aello (storm-wind) and Ocypet (swift-flier), children of two vague figures, Thaumas and Electra, who were also the parents of Iris, the goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods. These Harpies 'keep pace with the blasts of the winds on their swift wings, for they swoop high aloft'. In some Hesiodic fragments more details are found. The historian Strabo (c 64 BC-21 AD) quotes from the Guide to the Earth the story of King Phineus who was carried off by the Harpies 'to the land of the eaters of milk-curd who have waggons for houses'. These are obviously nomads living to the north of the Black Sea. This seems to be a different story of Phineus from the well known one, where Phineus's food and not his person was carried off.

Snatching at Table

Persecution by the Harpies was one of the punishments sent by the gods on Phineus the blind king who indiscreetly used his gift of prophecy to reveal secret plans of the gods. In Aeschylus's play *Phineus* they appear with ravening jaws and snatching hands, and wearing ankle-boots and stout socks, to seize food from Phineus's table. In one of the fragmentary plays by Sophocles also called *Phineus*, the Harpies are called snatchers; in the other they are compared to locusts.

The Harpies belong particularly to the Argonautic legend, in which the Argonauts visit Phineus on their way eastward to Colchis to find the Golden Fleece, and the fullest account of them, which has become traditional, appears in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, written in the 3rd century BC. The Argonauts arrive at the palace of Phineus on the west coast of the Black Sea, and are welcomed by him because they will deliver him from the Harpies. Phineus had accepted the gift of prophecy, even at the price of blindness and a long old age, but had misused it and offended the gods. As his heavenly punishment, the Harpies were sent to swoop down upon his table at every meal, carrying off nearly all the food but leaving enough to keep him alive and miserable, and leaving also a disgusting stench which could be smelt for some distance.

A Chase Through the Air

Fortunately, among the Argonauts are the winged Boreades, Zetes and Calais (sons of the north wind), who promise to rid Phineus of the Harpies if this is permitted by the gods. When the Harpies appear, they chase them away through the air with drawn swords; they catch them by the Plotae islands and are about to kill them when Iris flies down from Olympus to forbid it, promising that the Harpies will never return to plague Phineus. The Boreades turn back at the islands, now to be renamed the Strophades or Turning Points, and the Harpies dive into a cavern on Crete.

In a fragment from Apollodorus is another version of this legend, where the Harpies Nicothoe (victorious speed) or Aellopus (wind-foot) and Ocypete are pursued by the sons of the north wind. Nicothoe falls into the River Tigris in the Peloponnese (called Harpyes after her), and Ocypete flees to the Strophades; these islands were not originally localized but were later placed west of the Peloponnese.

Later poets, including the Latins, add little more information about the Harpies. Virgil, however, in the *Aeneid* (book 3) makes the Harpies sweep down on Aeneas and his Trojans as they try to spread a banquet on the beach of one of the Strophades Islands. The Harpies behave as they do in the account in the *Argonautica* but they are not driven off successfully; one of them warns Aeneas that his men will suffer hunger before they found a new city.

Ancient poets, commentators and lexicographers were inclined to derive the name 'Harpies' (Greek *Harpyiai* or sometimes *Arepyiai*) from the root of the Greek verb *harpazein* meaning 'to seize' or 'to snatch'. Modern philologists, concentrating on the form *Arepyiai*, tend to interpret the name as meaning 'tearers' or 'slicers'.

HARRANIAN RELIGION

THE CITY OF HARRAN in northwest Mesopotamia became in ancient times the centre of a mysterious religion that included the worship of the planets. Information about this religion is sparse and difficult to interpret, especially since much of it comes from hostile sources.

As far back as the second millenium BC, Harran was an important centre of the cult of Sin, the moon god. The original centre of the cult was the Sumerian city of Ur, known in the Bible as Ur of the Chaldeans. The Bible preserves an interesting connection between these two cult centres of moon worship; for according to the book of Genesis (11.31) Abraham, a native of Ur, journeyed with his father Terah and wife Sarah from Ur to settle in Harran.

In Mesopotamian mythology, Sin was an important deity connected with the regulation of time through the lunar month. He was regarded as the father of Shamash, the sun god, and of Ishtar, the goddess of fertility, who was identified with the planet Venus (see ISHTAR). The great temple of Sin at Harran was patronized by various Assyrian kings; but its greatest patron was Nabonidus (555–539 BC), the last king of Babylon. He claimed that he had been directed in a dream to rebuild the temple of Sin, where his mother was priestess. A stele (monumental stone) commemorating this rebuilding in 552 BC shows Nabonidus worshipping the emblems of the moon, the sun and the planet Venus. The temple of Sin attracted many visitors during the Roman period, including the emperors Caracalla and Julian.

Although the great temple of the moon god at Harran has vanished without trace, recent excavation at Sumatar Harabesi, in the Tektek mountains about 18 miles from Harran, has provided some valuable evidence about Harranian religion. A group of seven ruined stone buildings around a central mound were found to be of various shapes – round, square, and round on a square base. Inscriptions in Syriac discovered there mention Sin and a deity named Marilaha. The identity of the latter is a mystery. 'Mara' (lord) was a title of Baal-Shamin, 'master of the heavens'. There is evidence that Sin was sometimes called 'Sin Marilaha', thus equating him with the supreme deity. The cult signs of Marilaha were a sacred pillar and stool; Sin's emblem was a pillar, crowned by the upturned crescent of the moon and adorned with two tassels.

In neighbouring Edessa curious evidence of the cult of Atargatis, with whom Ishtar was identified, still survives in the form of teeming pools of fish which are tabu and never eaten: fish were associated with the ancient cult of the goddess (see FISH).

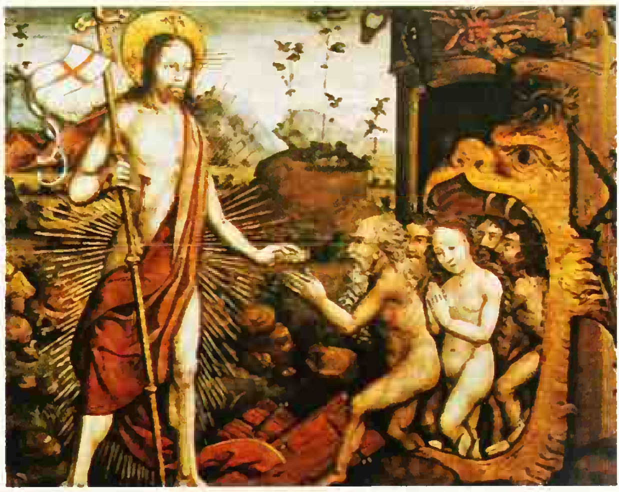
This archeological evidence, fragmentary and enigmatic as it unfortunately is, is supplemented by equally puzzling accounts by early Moslem writers. They identified the Harranian pagans with the Sabians, mentioned in the Koran as one of the religious communities permitted to exist. According to these writers, the Sabians of Harran recognized a supreme deity who was the primal cause of the universe. This deity had no contact with mankind but had placed the universe under the rule of the planets. Hence the Sabians worshipped the planets, or rather the demonic beings that governed them.

Rites of Human Sacrifice

Each planet was believed to have a special influence over some particular type of person. The Sabians were also reputed to celebrate 'mystery' rites, addressed principally to Shamal, lord of the *jinn*. In these secret rites they were suspected of using human sacrifice. There was a curious Harranian tabu on the eating of beans, because they were elliptical in shape whereas the celestial sphere is globular.

The Harranians and their planetary religion disappeared during the Mongol invasions in the 12th or 13th century. Some scholars believe that the Sabians still survive in the Mandaeans, a religious community living on the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates; on the available evidence this identification seems unlikely.

FURTHER READING: J. B. Segal, 'The Sabian Mysteries: the planet cult of ancient Harran' in *Vanished Civilizations* ed. E. Bacon (Thames & Hudson, 1963).



Giraudon

Harrowing of Hell
The harrying or despoiling of the land of the dead by a hero who enters the underworld, defeats Death and returns alive; the most famous example is Christ, who harrowed hell in the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection: in Greek mythology Hercules, Theseus, Orpheus and others visited the underworld and returned: King Arthur was said to have successfully raided the otherworld. See HELL.

HARVEST

Linked with death, for the corn came from under the earth where the dead resided, but even more with fertility and new life, the harvest was accompanied by rituals the world over, to ensure an abundance of crops

IT IS DIFFICULT for us to realize nowadays, with tins and frozen foods available throughout the year, and imported tropical fruits on our tables even in the middle of winter, the anxiety which our ancestors felt as they waited for the annual harvest. When man first progressed from the primitive stage of gathering wild foodstuffs to cultivation of the soil, the procession of the seasons became increasingly important. In an agricultural economy his very life depended on the success or failure of the crops, and enormous efforts were made to ensure a fruitful harvest.

The Jews still celebrate Succoth – the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles – as they have done since the time of the command in Deuteronomy (chapter 16), 'You shall keep the feast of booths seven days, when you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press; you shall rejoice in your feast.' Citron, palm, myrtle and willow (the 'four kinds') are carried in procession during the synagogue service, and each family builds a booth before the festival begins. As a rule it is set up in the garden if there is one, or if not, on the flat roof. The top of the booth is covered with green boughs, arranged in such a way that the starlight can shine through. This is to remind the Jews of the time of the Exodus, when they were nomads in the wilderness. Inside are gay decorations taken from the season's produce – apples, grapes, pomegranates and brightly coloured Indian corn.

The Harvest Supper

Churchgoers today send vegetables, fruit and flowers to the Harvest Festival service, a popular occasion followed by the traditional Harvest Supper. Best known as Harvest Home, it had many dialect names, like Kern, Mell and Horkey Supper.

On the evening of the day when the last load had been brought in, the farmer and his wife would traditionally provide a good meal for the reapers. As a rule it was served in the barn, which had been specially decorated with garlands and branches. In Lincolnshire the Old Sow often put in an appearance. This was two men disguised with sacking and wearing a head stuffed with furze, which they used for pricking the others.

Frumenty sometimes used to be served, a milk pudding made from wheat boiled in milk with raisins and currants, and flavoured with spices and sugar. More often there would be a round of beef, followed by plum pudding and served with plenty of beer.

Probably it was the memory of suppers such as these that the Pilgrim Fathers carried with them from England to America. During the autumn of 1621, settlers in Plymouth Colony gathered to give thanks for the harvest after their first difficult year in the New World. This was America's first Thanksgiving. The exact date of this first celebration has never been established (it has even been said that it was in February). But in 1864 President Lincoln set aside the last Thursday in November as the appointed day. (Canadians hold Thanksgiving earlier, in October.)

Today Thanksgiving Day is an important family occasion, with a traditional meal that includes roast turkey, corn on the cob, and pumpkin pie, in honour of the Pilgrims' typical fare. The day is also rich in special leisure activities, among them important football games. Interestingly, the ancient Mayans held an annual harvest celebration each autumn, on a particular day, which also featured turkey on the festive menu and ritual ball games. And many forest Indians of the American South, such as the Natchez, celebrated the harvest with a feast of specially grown corn and their own forms of ball games.

The English ancestors of the Pilgrim Fathers traditionally brought in their harvest with great style. The last load, decorated with branches and garlands, was taken triumphantly through the village. Handbells were rung, everyone cheered and shouted, and children who helped were presented with slices of plum cake. At some stage people hiding in the bushes threw buckets of water over the cart; the custom was rooted in imitative magic, being designed to ensure rain for next year's crop.

Seated on top of the load, and probably drenched to the skin, were the Lord of the Harvest and his Lady. Before the coming of mechanization farmers were obliged to engage extra hands to assist with the harvest. The men appointed one of their number to negotiate with the farmer and take th lead in the scything: he was called Lord o the Harvest. The second reaper, a ma dressed as a woman who replaced the Lor in his absence, was known as the Harves Lady. If anyone swore or told a lie in fron of the Lord of the Harvest, he was oblige to pay a fine. In Cambridgeshire each ne workman was 'shoed' by the Lord of th Harvest, who tapped the soles of his shoe in return for a shilling.

Mechanized farming eliminated the Lor and Lady of the Harvest. Gone too are th elaborate rituals surrounding the cutting o the last sheaf, in which it was supposed tha the power of the harvest resided. In som countries a few ears of corn were left standing in the field because people were afraid o exhausting the strength of the crop. The were said to be an offering for Odin's horses or those who dwell under the earth. However, cutting the last sheaf was a more usua ceremony. This could be a great honour, bu it also seems to have been regarded as disagreeable duty. In England the me sometimes used to throw their sickles at i in turn, as if they were anxious that th responsibility should be shared. Behind thi custom lay the old belief that the spirit o the corn had taken refuge in the last sheaf.

Crying the Mare

Sometimes it was carried in triumph t the farmhouse but often it was dumped on neighbour's land to get rid of it, in case i brought bad luck. Around Herefordshire an Shropshire the final handful of corn wa grasped and tied together. The men flun their sickles towards it and whoever wa successful cried:

> 'I have her!'

A brief ritual exchange followed:

> 'What have you?'
> 'A mare, a mare, a mare!'

This was called Crying the Mare. An ol Devonshire custom known as Crying th Neck suggests, on the contrary, that the fina sheaf was thought to bring good luck. Whil the reapers were finishing, an old harveste went round, selecting all the best ears h could find. These were gathered into bundle, known as the neck, which h plaited and arranged as attractively a possible. When the work of harvesting wa

To celebrate the yam harvest festival, girls in the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia wear bands of leaves round their arms, which they believe contain magical properties; they also rub their bodies with coconut oil, afterwards plastering themselves with marigold petals

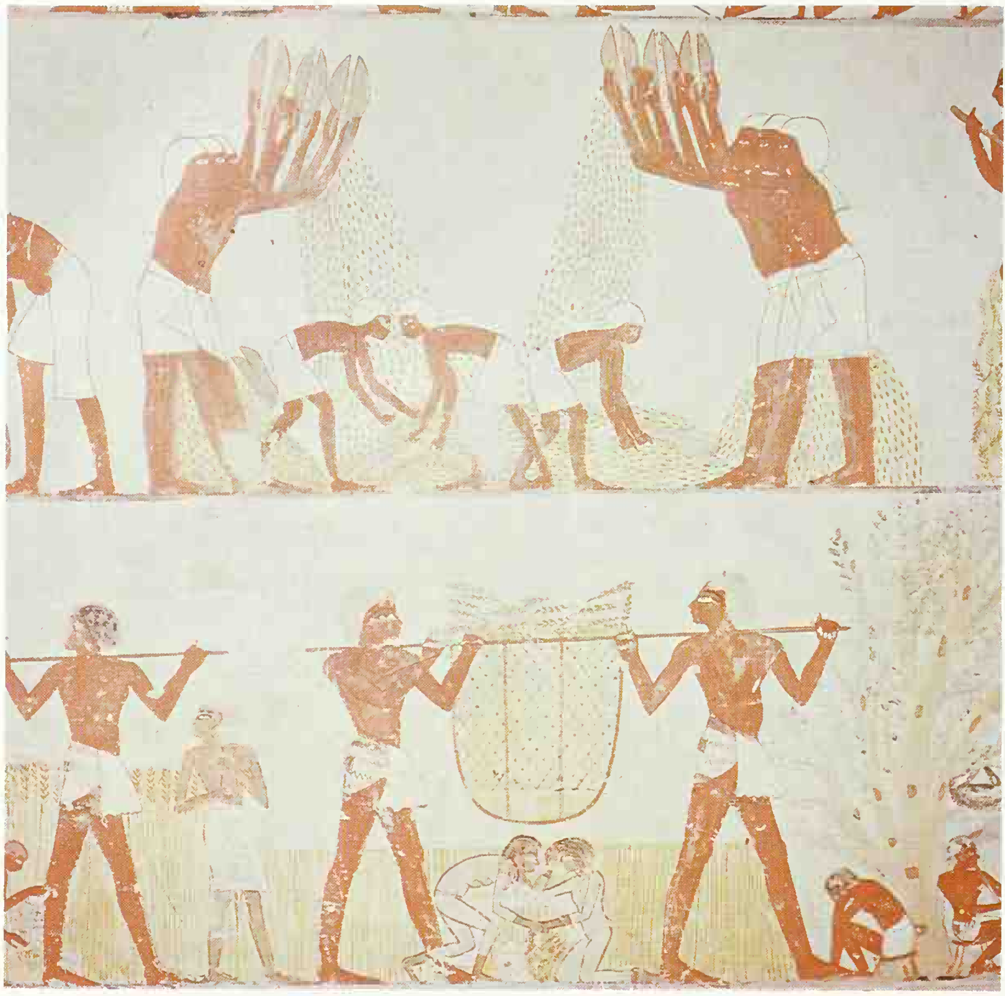
Richard Harrington

done, everyone formed a circle and the man who had made the neck stood in the centre, holding it firmly with both hands. He stooped, lowering the neck down to the ground, and all the men took off their hats; they too bent low, hats in hand. Then slowly standing upright, they raised their hats above their heads, and the man with the neck held it high in the air. Everyone cried 'the neck', and the whole ceremony was repeated three times over. There was a great deal of cheering and, during the melee which followed, someone seized the neck and ran with it to the farmhouse. A maid was waiting, ready at the door with a bucket of water. If the man could get past her, or enter the house by any other route, he was allowed to kiss her. But if he failed she soaked him thoroughly with water from her bucket.

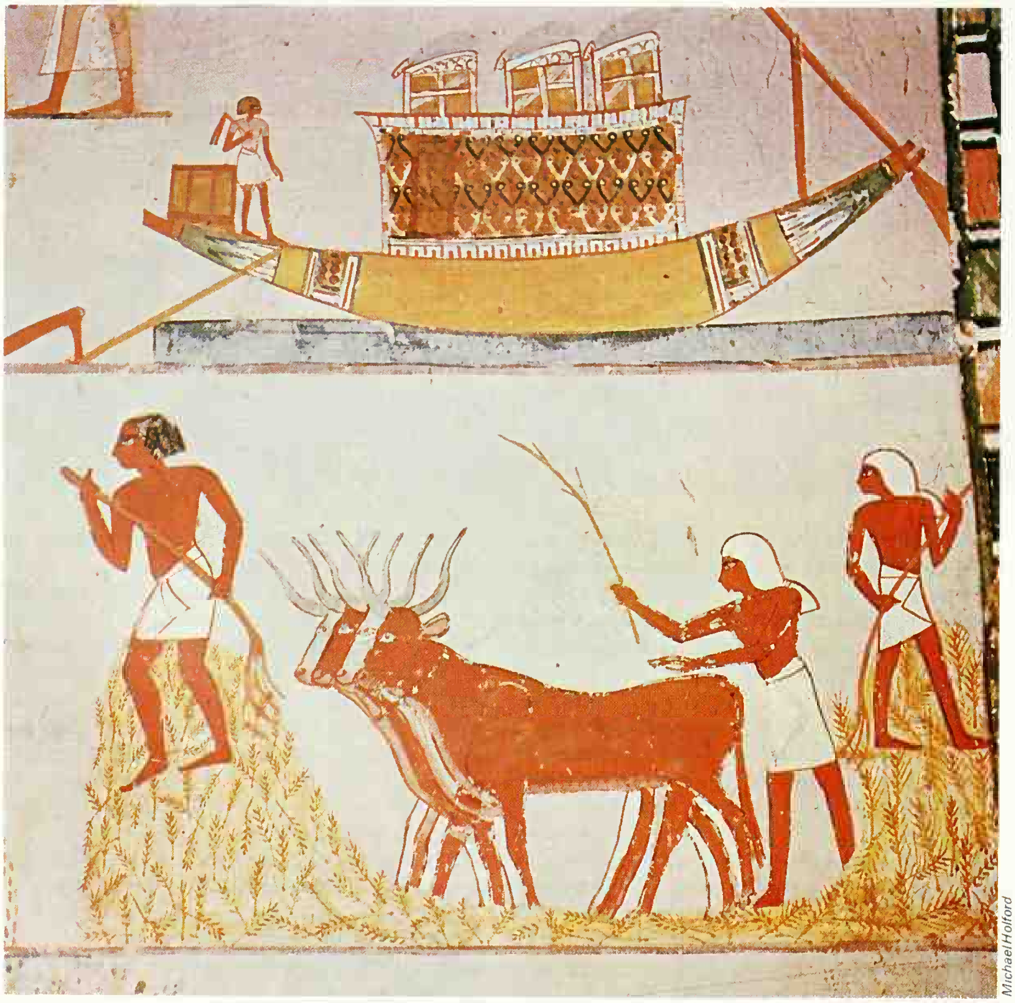
Harvest competitions of this kind used to be very popular. In Scotland and the north of England, groups of three or four men each took a ridge of grain and raced to see who would finish reaping first. But there used to be a day when 'kemping' as this was called, and indeed all harvesting, was forbidden. As John Brand, the Newcastle antiquary, tells us: 'There is one day in harvest on which the vulgar abstain from work, because of an ancient and foolish tradition, that if they do their work the ridges will bleed.'

A version of this strange belief turns up in the Shetlands. Swinaness, on the Island of Unst, was traditionally thought too sacred for cultivation because, so it was said, the sea kings had fought many furious battles there. One man ignored the prohibition and planted some seeds of corn but when the time for harvesting came, to his horror the ears dripped, not dew, but salty tears and the stalks were filled with blood.

This suggests that there was thought to be some connection between the harvest and the realm of the dead – 'those who dwell underneath the earth'. In Germany peasants used to break the first straws of hay brought into the barns, saying, 'This is food for the



Michael Holford



Michael Holford

With the change from merely gathering crops to deliberately growing them, the sowing and the harvest became two of the great ritual occasions of the year: harvest scenes from the Tomb of Menena in Egypt showing *(above left)* winnowing in progress, as bearers transport the grain in baskets and *(below left)* grain being trodden out of the husk, to be carried away by boat

Right 'False Face' harvest mask: these grotesque wooden masks were worn by North American Indians of the eastern seaboard during agricultural rituals, to drive off evil influences and encourage a successful harvest

dead'. Many peoples throughout the world hold annual festivals honouring the departed. The time of year chosen varies according to the region but there is a tendency to associate it with harvest.

In Arabia the last sheaf is ceremonially interred in a miniature grave, specially prepared with a stone placed at the head and another at the foot. The owner of the land, announcing that the Old Man is dead, prays that Allah will send 'the wheat of the dead'.

But if the harvest fields are associated with the realm of the dead, there are probably more ways in which they are linked to fertility and new life. In some countries people used to speak as if a child had been separated from its mother by the stroke of the sickle. A Pole who reaped the last handful of corn was told: 'You have cut the navel string.' In Prussia the last sheaf was called the Bastard: a boy was concealed inside, and the woman who bound it cried out as if in labour. An old woman acted as midwife until the 'birth' took place, and the boy inside the sheaf then squalled like a baby. The sheaf was swaddled with sacking and carried into the barn.

The Baby Rice Soul

In early Egypt fertility of the crops was closely associated with human fecundity. Min, god of vegetation and sexual reproduction, is always represented with phallus erect, a flail raised in his right hand. He was honoured as Lord of the Harvest, and temple carvings show him receiving a ceremonial offering of the first sheaf. Indonesians perform a ritual marriage at the time of the rice harvest. Two sheaves are fastened together in a bundle: this is called the bridal pair. One sheaf contains a special rice, the bridegroom. The other, which contains rice of the ordinary variety, represents the bride. A magician lays them together on a bed of leaves, so that their union may increase the next yield of rice.

Elaborate rituals surround the 'birth' of the Baby Rice Soul at harvest time in Malaya. Rubbish and unpleasant smelling herbs are burnt in advance to drive away evil spirits, and a magician is employed to choose seven stalks of rice, which are cut and swaddled like an infant. The Rice Baby is carried to the farmer's house, and all the protocol surrounding a human birth is carefully observed. On each of the three days

Bystanders at the burning of Latimer and Ridley are said to have remarked that the executions might have saved the crops, performed at the proper time

Museum of the American Indian

following, only one small basket of rice is allowed to be gathered. The reaper works in silence, taking care that his shadow never falls across the plants. But the real work of harvesting cannot begin until the seventh day after the birth of the Baby Rice Soul. Whatever is gathered then must be donated towards a feast held to honour the spirits of dead magicians.

Dolls Made of Corn

The power which was thought to exist in the crops was in fact often personified, not necessarily as a baby. Sometimes it took animal form – a wolf, pig, goat, hare or cock – perhaps because small creatures often took refuge in the final sheaf when the rest of the field had been scythed. In England the last sheaf was used to make an effigy which was dressed in women's clothes and carried on the Horkey Cart to the Harvest Supper, where it sat on a special chair. This puppet had many regional names: kern baby, mell doll, harvest queen and, in Kent, the ivy doll. The Yorkshire mell sheaf was made from different varieties of corn, plaited together and decorated with ribbons and flowers. It was placed in the middle of the room for people to dance round. Sometimes the kern baby was hung up in the farmhouse and kept through the following year to bring good luck and be a protection against witchcraft. A Lancashire farmer is said to have laid a curse on anyone damaging his puppet before the coming harvest.

In 1899 an Old Lincolnshire woman remarked that one of these dolls – made of barley straw and stuck up on a sheaf facing the gate – would ward off thunder and lightning: 'Prayers be good enough as far as they goes, but the Almighty mun be strange and throng with so much corn to look after, and in these here bad times we musn't forget old Providence. Happen it's best to keep in with both parties.'

Rick decorating used to be quite popular in England. A corn dolly was worked into the corner of the stack to bring good luck. Some stacks in the west of Somerset still carry a little stook at each end of the ridge, and a peaked projection on some cottages in that area is called the dolly by very old people. A few farmers leave the last stook in the field to stand till it falls apart, or it may be hung in the barn. But if the farmer is questioned about this custom, he usually replies that it is intended for the birds; the meaning has been forgotten.

Harvest knots – twists of straw in attractive shapes – are still made in parts of Ireland. Girls wear them in their hair and men fasten them to their coats. At one time they were exchanged as tokens of love. In England, if an engaged girl wished to bear children from her marriage, she went secretly to the harvest fields on a Friday night. Taking a straw from the stooks for every child desired, wheat for a boy and oat for a girl, she plaited them into a garter, murmuring a charm referring to the straw on which the Christ Child lay in the manger. The garter had to be worn until the following Monday morning. If it stayed in place the omen was good, but if it broke or slipped the spell would not succeed. It was also very important that the girl's fiancé should know nothing about this. Only a virgin could use the charm: a girl who was not would cause harm to all her children.

In southern Europe, 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, is sometimes called the Feast of Our Lady in Harvest. In Italy it replaced the festival of the goddess Diana on 13 August: further north, where the harvest comes later, the crop is dedicated to the Virgin Mary on 8 September, the Feast of her Nativity.

Harvest Booths

Boughs of fruit-trees, branches of palm-trees, of leaf-trees and of Arabah-trees from the river beds were taken, and from them and their foliage, booths were constructed in which the congregation of Israel dwelt during the Feast of Tabernacles. The later texts alleged that this was done to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt, but this was clearly a reinterpretation of an earlier agricultural practice, the purpose of which was to promote fertility at the end of harvest, and to secure the much-needed rain at a critical moment marked by the Rosh hashShanah (New Year's Day) on the first of Tishri, when the autumnal rites began.

No doubt in their Canaanite form they included feasting and erotic dancing such as obtained outside the vineyards at these seasons, referred to in the book of Judges, when ecstatic revels not very different from those engaged in by the Maenads of Dionysus in Thrace and Phrygia, were held in joyous abandon for the bounty received, and to secure a fresh outpouring of vital energy in the crops and in mankind in the forthcoming season.

E. O. James
Seasonal Feasts and Festivals

A young virgin features in the central role of a once popular Polish custom. *Wienjec*, the harvest wreath or crown, was made from the final sheaf and prettily decorated with a variety of flowers, nuts and apples and perhaps even a gingerbread cake. It was blessed in church, usually on the Feast of the Assumption when herbs were also blessed, and worn by the chief girl harvester. It was essential that she should be chaste for, if she were not, it was supposed that the fertility of the land would be destroyed and the harvest would be a poor one. The girl was expected to walk in procession to the farmhouse door, where she was received by the farmer who drenched her with water – a rain charm again.

This custom of throwing water on the last sheaf, or else on the person who brings it, is widespread. In the north of the Greek island of Euboea, when the corn sheaves had been stacked, the farmer's wife brought out a pitcher of water and offered it to the men for washing their hands. Each sprinkled water on the corn and on the threshing floor. The farmer's wife then held the pitcher at an angle and ran as fast as she could around the stack without spilling a drop. When this had been done she made a wish that the stack would last as long as the circle she had just made.

Human Flesh to Aid Crops

Rituals of this kind are harmless by any standards. Not so some of the customs of the past: 'The seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest' (2 Samuel, chapter 21). This ambiguous remark, referring to the killing of seven men in time of famine, dates back to biblical days. However, English bystanders at the burning of Bishops Latimer and Ridley on 16 October, 1555 are said to have remarked that the executions might have saved the crops, had they been performed at the proper time.

The Khonds, a tribe of Bengal, offered a sacrifice to assist the harvest until the middle of the 19th century. The victim, often the descendant of other victims, was

Verfehrsamt

Left The harvest pillar remains the focal point of the Cannstatt festival held each September at Stuttgart; begun in 1818, this great harvest festival now includes a funfair and cattle market, and goes on for 12 days *Above* Font in a Somerset church decorated with field and garden produce: the practice of holding a Harvest Festival Service, established in the 19th century, has ousted the Harvest Home

called the *Meriah*. About two weeks before the sacrifice was due to be offered, his hair was all cut off, and he was taken in procession to a virgin forest and anointed with melted butter. When the moment arrived he was drugged and crushed to death, or roasted over a fire, and cut into little pieces. Representatives from many villages arrived for the occasion. Each of them was given a small portion of flesh, which was taken home and ceremonially buried in the fields. What remained, chiefly the bones and head, was buried and the ashes scattered over the farmland so that the harvest would be successful. This custom was eventually brought to an end by the British authorities.

In Tibet, to the north, the chief purpose of the Harvest Festival was to propitiate the *Zhidah*, local spirits of the mountains, so that they would send enough sun and rain to assist the crops and hold back any frost or hail. The *Yonnehcham*, Dance of the Sacrificers, was performed specially in their honour. This took place around the middle of September. For 100 days before, the priests stayed indoors to avoid accidentally stepping on any of the many worms and summer insects about at that time of year. They were forbidden to quarrel amongst themselves and anything borrowed had to be returned. It was also very important that the sky should not look upon a corpse, so anyone who chanced to die during the festival was temporarily buried in a stable. Since there was always the risk of light from moon or stars, even night burial was ruled out. Harvest was a gay occasion and large crowds came to see the dancing. They pitched tents and cooked on great outdoor stoves: some popular favourites were noodles, meat balls, steamed wheat bread, green peaches and buttered tea.

Evidently the Zhidah were among those spirits well disposed towards mankind. Probably the forces appealed to by ringing church bells in England were imagined to be less benign. The ostensible purpose of this custom was to ensure the safety of the gathered crop. In Cheshire bells were rung three times over oats, twice over wheat.

'Burning the Witch', a Yorkshire custom, perhaps also derives originally from some ritual disposing of a malevolent influence. At harvest time peas were left to dry in small piles, known locally as 'reaps'. On the last day, when the remaining corn had been cut, some of these piles were pushed together and burnt in the straw. Boys and girls ran about, blacking each other's faces with charred straw. Everyone enjoyed the peas and there was dancing and Cream Pot Supper – cream and currant cakes flavoured with caraway.

In Shetland the menu for the *Foy* was not dissimilar. This traditional party, held at the skipper's house, is interesting since it was, in effect, a Harvest Home of the sea. It was held at the beginning of August, when the summer white fishing season closed. Crew members and their wives were entertained with high tea and plenty to drink. A favourite toast was: 'Lord! Open the mouth of the grey fish, and hold thy hand about the corn.' (See also CORN).

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New American Library); E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (Routledge & Kegan, 1966); Sir James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980); E. O. James, *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals* (Barnes & Noble, 1961).

Spreading from the ghettos of Poland to Rumania, Hungary, the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe, Hasidism produced a rich vein of legend and folklore. A popular movement based on the mystic teachings of the Cabala, it was strongly opposed by the orthodox rabbis

HASIDISM

THE SITUATION of East European Jewry in he 18th century was very conducive to a religious revival. They lived in abject poverty and misery, and had not yet recovered from he disastrous massacres of the 17th century, when the Cossacks and local peasantry had killed over 100,000 Jews. These errible events had undoubtedly predisposed Polish Jewry to accept the message of the pseudo-Messiah Sabbatai Zevi. The shameful collapse of this messianic movement (the messiah apostatized and became a Moslem to save his life) left behind it a trail of confusion, despair, despondency and moral chaos. The poverty-stricken and – by rabbinical standards – ignorant masses uffered from a sense of religious nadequacy, heightened by the intellectual presumption of the rabbinical elite, who held that only Talmudic learning opened the gates to the full religious life.

There were also circles of 'spirituals' associated with the mystical tradition of Lurianic Cabalism (see CABALA) or with groups that had arisen in the aftermath of he Sabbatian messianic movement; these were keenly aware that the traditional orms of piety, such as meticulous observance of the law, Talmudic learning, trict asceticism and mortifications, did not assure spiritual perfection. It is against his background of misery, demoralization and spiritual bewilderment that the rise in outhern Poland of the religious and mystical revival known as the hasidic movement has to be seen.

The term Hasidism is derived from the Hebrew noun *hasid* which, in biblical Hebrew and especially in the Psalms, means one who is steadfast in his trust and faith n God and in his devotion to him. The plural form *hasidim* or 'pious ones' came to be used more than once to designate groups outstanding for their religious fervour and devotion. The circles of Jewish zealots in Palestine who took up arms, in the times of he Maccabees, against the repression of he Jewish religion were known as Hasidim, and the same term was used by a circle of Jewish mystics that flourished in Germany n the 12th and 13th centuries. There is, however, no historic connection between these earlier movements and 18th century Polish-Russian Hasidism.

Master of the Good Name

Among the impoverished masses superstiious practices were part of the current folk-religion. For them the Cabala was connected with the use of amulets and charms to ward off sickness and other evils, and masters of the name' (masters of the powerful names of God, capable of preparing potent amulets or of healing ailments) were much sought after. The founder of Hasidism was such a 'master of the name' (in Hebrew *Baal Shem*), but he was also a genuine mystic with a message.

Two members of the Hasidim wearing their traditional costume buy willows in a Jerusalem market for the New Year ceremony of shaking away their sins. Israel is now one of the main centres of Hasidism

Palphot Herzlia

Little is known about Israel ben Eliezer (c1700–1760), the *Baal Shem Tov* ('master of the good name') and the halo of legend that very soon surrounded his life and personality makes it extremely difficult to reconstruct his biography and teaching with any precision. According to hasidic hagiography, his career was a chain of miraculous events: his birth was foretold by the prophet Elijah, his soul was a spark from that of the Messiah, he was taught by celestial mentors, and his life was shot through with miracles and heavenly interventions.

An increasing number of admirers flocked to him seeking his blessing, intercession and guidance for their spiritual as well as physical welfare. Among those who became his disciples were some scholars, one of whom, R. Dov Bev of Mezhiritch, became the leader and organizer of the movement after the Baal Shem's death. The presence of these scholars and their acceptance of the Baal Shem's authority helped to counteract hostile propaganda to the effect that his following consisted exclusively of the ignorant and superstitious.

For opposition was not lacking. The mystical heresies and moral chaos that had come in the wake of the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi had made the rabbinical leadership doubtful of any new movement, and the Hasidim were suspected of heresy or at least of religious anarchy. In fact there was little that was completely new in hasidic teaching and many of its elements and formulations were derived from traditional rabbinical, moral and cabalistic doctrines. The Hasidim never thought of questioning the authority of rabbinical law, or the competence of the rabbinical authorities to interpret and administer it. But their emphasis on the 'inner meaning' of the law and on the paramount necessity of ecstatic devotion and singleness of heart in its performance, their fidelity to charismatic leaders and their adoption of certain slightly different devotional and liturgical practices only antagonized the opposing camp even more.

Thus their emphasis on inwardness and spiritual exaltation (that is, on the right 'mood' of joy and enthusiasm) made them attach less importance to the exact times prescribed for the statutory prayers. They also adopted the Sephardic rite of the prayerbook because they held that this rite lent itself better to the practice of mystical meditation. The Baal Shem himself said that his mission was 'to stir the hearts of those seeking communion with God. This contains nothing new . . . It is merely a strengthening of the faith which has somehow been forgotten.'

A Scandal to the Orthodox

Like many other spiritual movements, Hasidism ranged from pure contemplative mysticism to the crudest forms of popular enthusiasm and superstition. The Baal Shem's doctrine of 'serving God with joy' and 'in bodily things' shocked the stern rabbis, especially as this joyful service expressed itself in ecstatic singing, wild dancing and not infrequent resort to strong drink. Anti-hasidic writers may have exaggerated in their descriptions of these excesses; yet the fact that Hasidism very emphatically did not wish to teach the way of perfection to a small spiritual elite but sought to bring the living experience of communion with, and love of, God to all and sundry, inevitably meant a vulgarization of spiritual values and techniques. Thus prayer was considered as a state of ecstatic communion with God in which the personality was free from the trammels of the body; and hasidic legend tells how the body of the Baal Shem used to tremble violently at prayer so that bystanders were also seized by trembling and the building would shake. When this ecstatic prayer spread to the hasidic masses, it would take the form of shouting and twisting of the body – enough to make the hasidic key concepts of *simhah* ('joy'), *kawwanah* ('inwardness'), *devekuth* ('communion with God') and *hithlahavuth* ('enthusiasm') objects of scandal to the orthodox and of ridicule to the rationalists.

For any adequate understanding of the movement it is necessary to take into account its various components. There is the teaching of the hasidic masters as laid down in their voluminous writings (mainly in the form of commentaries and homilies on biblical books); there are the stories and anecdotes told about the great masters; there is the popular hasidic literature (mainly extolling the miraculous powers of the hasidic saints); and there is, last but not least, the actual life lived by the Hasidim.

Lifting the Divine Sparks

Hasidic doctrine, whilst continuing to use the vocabulary of Lurianic Cabalism, added new emphases which in fact gave it a totally new quality. The hasidic use of the traditional phrase 'there is no place empty of him' had a meaning that went far beyond the orthodox one and came very close to pantheistic heresy. Hasidism took over from Lurianic Cabalism the idea of the cosmos as a chain of emanations in which 'higher' and 'lower' worlds reflected and influenced one another, and in which man occupied a key position, precisely because he could act upon the higher (and even divine) spheres through the meditative quality of his actions. In Lurianism this had meant that man had the task of performing the *tikkun* (restoration) of the fallen world by liberating and 'lifting up' the sparks of divine light that had fallen into matter and into the grasp of the demonic powers. But in terms of hasidic spirituality this meant that man fulfilled his religious calling not merely in specifically ritual acts but in everything and in everyday activity. Because the divine sparks, yearning to return to their source, are buried everywhere in the world and embedded in all things – in human beings as well as in all animate and inanimate beings – man encounters them in every situation and engages in the redemptive activity of *tikkun* and of the 'lifting of the holy sparks' in everything he does – the most ordinary labour, business, small talk, eating and drinking – provided he does it with the proper meditative intent, kawwanah, devekuth and total sincerity of purpose.

The Role of the Tsaddik

The connecting link between the spirituality of the charismatic mystic and that of the mass of simple folk was the institution of the *tsaddik* (literally the 'righteous', the hasidic leader). The tsaddik, having reached the higher rungs on the ladder to spiritual perfection, could bind to himself in a bond of mystical community the souls of his followers. In precisely the same way as he could stoop down and perform the descent into the lowest spheres in order to lift up the fallen sparks, so he could bind to himself imperfect souls and raise them, with himself, to spiritual perfection.

A new type of loose social organization evolved round the hasidic leaders. In the centre was the tsaddik surrounded by his close disciples and his permanent and often sumptuous court; next to them was the mass of followers and devotees who would make the pilgrimage to his court on festivals or special occasions when they felt the need of help and advice in spiritual or mundane matters. Whereas some hasidic leaders opposed 'tsaddikism', others made it a cornerstone of their doctrine. To many orthodox people the hasidic doctrine and practice of tsaddikism came dangerously near the notion of a 'mediator' between the individual and his god – a notion generally considered to be typically Christian and heretical from a Jewish point of view.

Tsaddikism, for all the socially integrating role it played in the development of early Hasidism, subsequently became a demoralizing and corrupting factor. The leading disciples of the great hasidic masters became founders of dynasties, and their descendants acted as tsaddikim and commanded the loyalty and devotion of their followers by an almost matter-of-course right of succession. Eventually the various hasidic groups came to be distinguished not so much as schools or sects (although there were doctrinal and other differences between them) as by loyal adherence to dynasties.

Spread of Hasidism

The Baal Shem's way of 'serving God' in joy and mystical contemplation attracted an increasing number of followers. Although he left no writings, many of his teachings and sayings are quoted in the works of his disciple R. Jacob Joseph of Polnoye. His other disciple, R. Dov Bev, the 'Great Maggid' of Mezhiritch (d 1772), succeeded him as the leader of Hasidism and became the real organizer of the movement. The great leading figures and early masters of Hasidism were all direct or indirect disciples of Dov Bev. From Mezhiritch the movement branched out in three main directions. There was a Ukrainian branch a Lithuanian branch and a Polish-Galician branch, represented by Hasidism as it developed in the Jewries of Poland, Rumania and Hungary.

Rabbinical opposition to the new Hasidic movement was conducted with al the bitterness of which the Jewish communities in the ghettos of Eastern Europe were capable. The leader of the anti-hasidic struggle was Elijah of Vilna (d 1797), the leading rabbinical authority of the age and an outstanding Cabalist. (Evidently the conflict was not between 'rabbinical' and 'mystical' Judaism but between institutional rabbinical forms – which included Cabalism – and what appeared to be a dangerous mass movement of spiritual anarchy.) Bans of excommunication were issued by Elijah of Vilna against the new movement, and for several generations feeling ran high. Only the rise of the modern enlightenment in the Jewish ghetto brought the two groups together: in face of the common enemy the two types of uncompromising and fundamentalist orthodoxy closed ranks.

The propagandists and polemicists of the enlightenment took Hasidism as their special butt, for to them it represented the very incarnation of superstition, bigotry and stupid obscurantism. The dependence of the believer on the tsaddik and the faith in his unlimited miraculous powers, the custom of making pilgrimages to the tsaddik's court and depositing there one's request accompanied by a gift of money, the luxurious growth of hasidic legend and folklore (including stories of demonic possession and of exorcisms performed by the power of the tsaddik), these and many other manifestations of Hasidism could easily be held up to ridicule. Historical scholarship has tended, until recently, to be unsympathetic to Hasidism, which was viewed as a sad, though perhaps understandable product of the dark and miserable ghettos. With the emergence of romantic tendencies in Jewish life and literature, a reappraisal of Hasidism began. Its mystical orientation, its yearning for a pure intensity of life, its folk-character which seemed to make it a manifestation of the soul of the people, its folkloric expressions in song, dance, tales and legends – all these were extolled in a new, romanticizing literature. This tendency reached its peak in the monumental work of Martin Buber, who devoted many of his writings to an interpretation of Hasidism in terms of his own, essentially existential, philosophy.

The main centres of Hasidism having been in Eastern Europe, they were wiped out by the Nazis in the Second World War. At present the main centres are in Israel and in the United States, where a number of hasidic dynasties have re-established themselves.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

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Lady Lisgar, who in 1881 married Sir Francis Fortescue-Turvile of Bosworth Hall, a Roman Catholic stronghold since 1630, refused to allow a priest to give supreme unction to a dying maidservant; as a result she was condemned to haunt the house, and her ghostly figure has been seen in her bedroom and at the end of corridors

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

'Some people have experienced such intolerable sensations of misery and fear in that corridor that they have found it impossible to remain in it': there are too many well-attested cases of hauntings to write the whole phenomenon off as an illusion

HAUNTED HOUSES

MOST PEOPLE, when they think of ghosts, think first of haunted houses. This is not, of course, because apparitions are generally supposed to appear, or strange happenings to occur, only in family dwellings. On the contrary, if it were possible to compile a detailed map of all the places which are now, or once were, said to be haunted, a great diversity of open-air sites would have to be marked upon it, as well as many buildings other than homes. Ghostly manifestations have been recorded in the vicinity of prehistoric barrows and ancient burial-grounds, in fields where medieval deserted villages once stood, on battlefields known to history and sometimes in places where tradition preserves the memory of some battle or local skirmish about which history has nothing to say (see ARMIES).

Nevertheless, a host of stories, some very well attested, support the popular belief that many houses of all ages and sizes, from castles to cottages, are or have been haunted by those who lived or died in them, and sometimes by entities more difficult to account for than simply the returning dead. Sights and sounds outside normal experience have undoubtedly been seen and heard in such houses, and have been vouched for by a great number of reliable and serious witnesses. Various theories have been put forward in an attempt to explain these happenings, ranging from acceptance of the oldest and most usual belief that they are straightforward visitations from beyond the grave, or possibly instances of telepathy between the living and the dead, down to the view that every such experience is purely subjective and due to hallucination on the part of the percipient.

Ghostly manifestations are of many different kinds. Some apparitions are no more than fleeting and elusive forms, suddenly perceived and quickly gone. Often they are quite unknown to those who see them, no legend accounts for them, and they seem to be unaware of, or uninterested in, the living occupants of the house. Yet they cannot be dismissed as mere illusion, because they appear again and again, and have been seen at different times by a variety of witnesses. Others are distinct and recognizable figures, and some are so normal in appearance that they are mistaken for living people, at least at first. Or that which haunts the house may not be seen at all. Noises are heard, though nothing visible makes them, sometimes loud and terrifying, sometimes slight yet clearly audible, like the faint murmur of voices, or the sound of crying, or footsteps passing along a corridor or down the stairs. There are houses which contain rooms that are 'restless'. They are not haunted in the sense that anything ghostly has been seen or heard in them, yet it is impossible to sit in peace in them, or concentrate upon any work, for more than a very short period. Others have rooms or passages which from time to time are filled with a brooding atmosphere of sadness or fear. A curious phenomenon frequently recorded by ghost-hunters as a preliminary to certain forms of psychica activity is a sudden and distinct fall in room-temperature, and in one haunted farmhouse at Yarnton in Oxfordshire, the inmates are warned that the ghost is about to 'walk' by the slow spread through the house of a peculiarly sweet scent.

To the difficult question of what causes some houses to be persistently haunted, sometimes by more than one ghost, there can be no certain answer in the present state of our knowledge. These ghosts may perhaps be accounted for by the theory that somehow, in some manner we do not understand, they are bound to their old homes by emotional ties so strong that even death

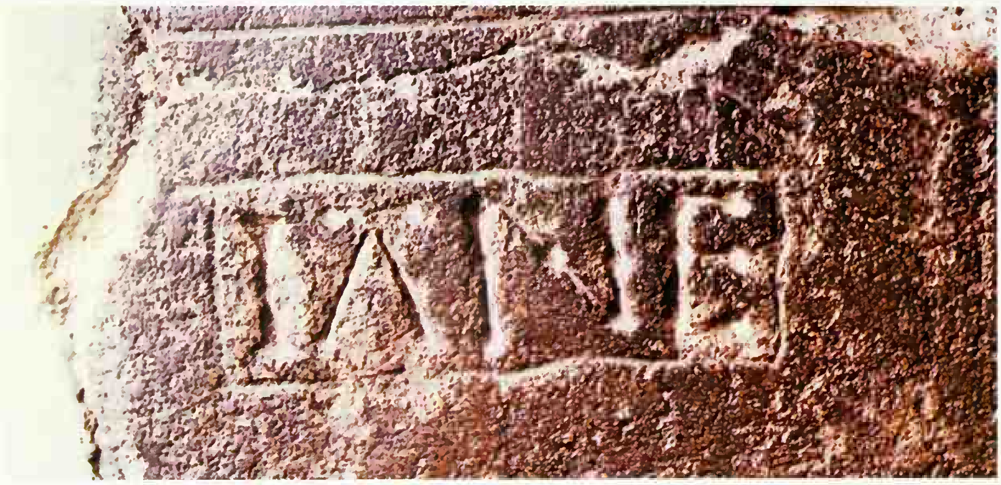
cannot sever them. The popular belief is that these ties are nearly always the result of some past state of bitter unhappiness, or violent terror, or the guilt of an unexpiated sin, and in many recorded cases, family tradition runs along the same lines. There are, however, other tales which suggest that the dead sometimes return for no other reason than that they loved, and were happy in, the places that they now haunt.

The *Athenaeum* of January 1880 contains an account of what must surely have been a ghost of this unharassed type, written by Dr Augustus Jessop, the antiquary. He relates how, on 10 October 1879, he went to stay with Lord Orford at Mannington Hall in Norfolk. His purpose was to consult certain rare books in the library, and that night, at his own request, he was left alone to work in an adjoining room after the rest of the household had gone to bed. At about one o'clock in the morning, while he was quietly writing, he suddenly perceived, first, a hand within a foot of his own elbow, and then, when he turned his head, a figure which he described as 'a somewhat large man, with his back to the fire, bending slightly over the table and apparently examining the pile of books that I had been at work upon.' The apparition was seated, with his face turned away from the observer, so that only part of it was visible; he had closely cut reddish-brown hair and wore 'a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk, or some such material', with a close-fitting upstanding collar. Dr Jessop realized instantly that the figure was not of this world but he felt no fear, only curiosity and keen interest. 'There he sat,' he writes, 'and I was fascinated: afraid, not of his staying, but lest he should go.'

He did go, a moment later, when the antiquary stretched out his hand to move one of the books. The living scholar went

Glamis Castle, the home of the Earl and Countess of Strathmore: somewhere in its thick walls lies the Secret of Glamis, a chamber where a previous Earl is supposed to have hidden his son who was half man and half beast; Malcolm II of Scotland was murdered in the castle in 1033, and for years there was a bloodstain on the floor of a room known as 'Malcolm's Room'

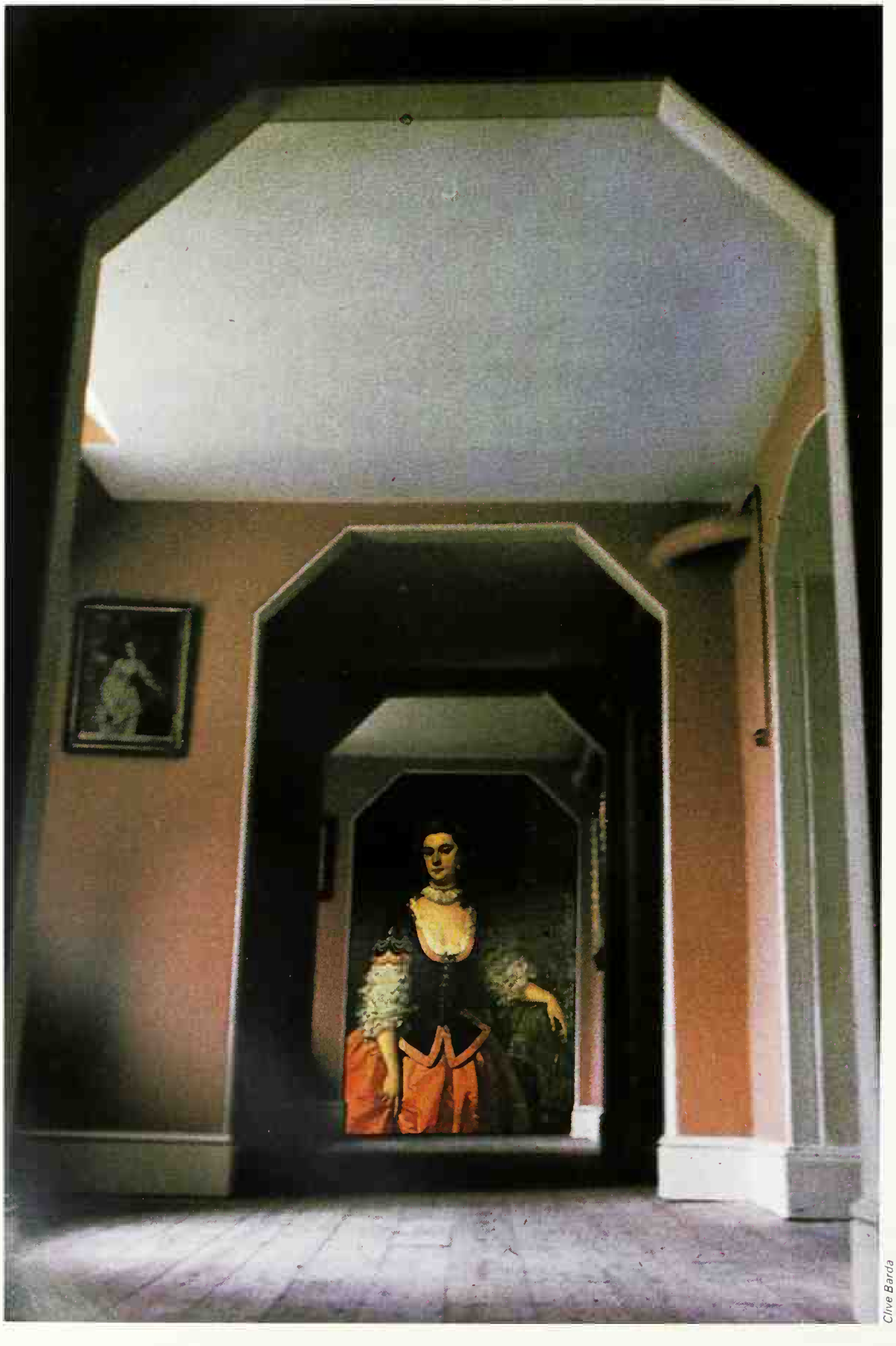
Daily Telegraph Colour Library



Chris Barker

Left The name 'Jane' was allegedly carved into the wall of Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London by the husband of Lady Jane Grey; one of the many ghosts that haun the Tower, she was imprisoned there afte her short reign of only nine days

Below left One of the two ghosts that have been seen at Longleat, home of the Marquess of Bath, is that of a woman, said to be the wife of the second Viscount Weymouth, who appears in a passage at the top of the house in an agony of terror and grief; according to tradition she was present when her husband killed her lover in a duel and then buried the body. Some years ago when central heating was being installed in the house, the remains of a young man wearing 18th century clothing were found in the cellar



Clive Barda

on writing and after about five minutes, the ghost reappeared in exactly the same place and attitude as before. Side by side they sat, the only beings still awake in the silent house, the phantom still intent upon the books, and Dr Jessop trying to think of something to say to his companion, until he suddenly found he was afraid to speak. He finished the last few words he had to write and threw down the book he was using; at the slight sound it made in falling, the apparition vanished again. This time he did not return, though Dr Jessop waited for a few moments to see if he would do so. Then, his work being done, he carried the books back to the library; but on second thought, he kept one of them 'and laid it upon the table where I had been writing when the phantom did me the honour to appear to me.' He went to bed and slept very soundly, and we shall never know now whether his visitor returned or not to read the book that had been left out for him.

In his *Early Reminiscences* (1923), Sabine Baring-Gould describes the haunting of his house at Lew Trenchard in Devon, by the ghost of an ancestress, known in her day as Madam Gould. Her son dissipated a good part of the estate by his extravagances, and when he died, she set herself to restore the property. This she did by sheer hard work and business ability. She died in 1795, sitting upright in her chair because she refused to allow illness to drive her to bed, and thereafter she haunted the house.

Footsteps believed to be hers were heard on more than one occasion, passing down the Long Gallery. Once, when a member of the family was very ill, the night-nurse was roused from sleep by a loud knock on the door and a woman's voice saying, 'It is time for her to have her medicine.' No one was visible when the door was opened, and no one was afterwards traced as the speaker. In 1918, when two of Baring-Gould's grandchildren were staying at Lew Trenchard, their two nurses gave notice because they had both seen a ghostly figure bending over the children as they slept. A guest going alone into the drawing-room saw an elderly lady in a satin dress and an old white-haired man sitting, as though in conversation, on opposite sides of the fireplace. No such people were staying in the house but from the description given, it seemed likely that they were Madam Gould and her friend

Parson Elford, who often used to sit together here when they were alive.

A variety of other stories were remembered by the local people, some of which suggest that the family ghost had absorbed other legends of the district, as strong-minded spectres sometimes do. These tales can be discounted but the actual haunting of the house is well attested. It is difficult o think of any reason for it other than Madam Gould's unwillingness (or perhaps, nability) to leave the place which had been he centre of her earthly hopes and affections for so long.

Corridor of Agony

Longleat in Wiltshire, now famous as the home of lions, has at least two ghosts. One of them is a friendly and unalarming figure, an old man wearing a long black robe reminiscent of the garments favoured by elderly Elizabethan gentlemen, who haunts he Red Library. The identity of this phantom is not altogether certain but the most probable theory is that he is Sir John Thynne, the builder of the house, who died n 1580. If he now returns occasionally to he immense and lovely house which was his greatest achievement, it is perhaps not entirely surprising.

The second haunting is of a quite different character. In a passage at the top of he house, the ghost of a woman appears, walking up and down in an agony of grief and terror. Even when she is not visible, some people have experienced such intolerable sensations of misery and fear in that corridor that they have found it impossible o remain in it. The ghost is believed to be hat of Lady Louisa Carteret, whose portrait may be seen in the Lower Dining-Room. She died in 1736, and a grim family egend accounts for her continued presence n the house.

She was the daughter of the Earl of Granville and the wife of the second Viscount Weymouth. The latter seems to have been a man of somewhat difficult emperament, and the marriage was not happy. Tradition says that she had a lover, though who he was is not now remembered, and that her husband, returning unexpecedly to Longleat after an absence, found the young man and his wife together. The two men fought a duel then and there, up and down the passage, without seconds or any witnesses except the horrified girl. The over was killed; and since his death in this furtive and unwitnessed fight was legally murder, his body was hastily and secretly buried in the cellar.

This story is legend, not history, but there s some evidence to support it. Soon after the time when the duel is supposed to have taken place, Lord Weymouth appears to have taken a strong dislike to Longleat. He eft it and went to live at Horningsham, returning to his home only on rare occasions. From then on, he neglected the place entirely, and when his son (afterwards the first Marquess of Bath) inherited it in 1751, he found the house in a state of disrepair, and the once elaborate formal gardens an overgrown wilderness. We do not know what reasons Lord Weymouth had for acting in this way but if he had in fact murdered a man and buried his corpse there, that might be a sufficient explanation. Some years ago, a curious discovery was made, which looks very much like a confirmation of the legend. When central heating was being put into the house, the cellar flagstones had to be lifted. Under them the remains of a young man wearing jackboots and clothes of the early 18th century were found. It cannot be proved that these bones were those of the unhappy lover but it seems very probable that they were, especially as no other known incident in the history of the house can account for them.

We cannot tell why, of the three persons involved in this tale of hatred, jealousy and crime, it should be Lady Louisa alone who haunts the house, and not either the murderer or his victim. As yet, we do not understand the laws that govern these matters; nor do we know what it is that causes some ghostly manifestations to persist for years, even centuries, and then cease for no obvious reason, either abruptly, or by a gradual process of fading. Genuine ghost-tales are rarely neatly rounded off, as are their fictional counterparts, though there are, of course, cases where the haunting has, apparently, been ended by some human action, such as resort to exorcism, or the burial in consecrated ground of hitherto unhallowed remains, or occasionally the destruction of the house involved. This last is not always as effective as might be expected; sometimes the psychic power is transferred to a new building on the same site, which may account for curious happenings recorded in council houses.

In a Black Cloak

Sudden death, and especially death by violence, has often been cited as a reason for known hauntings. So has suicide, which was once widely regarded as an unforgivable sin, and which in any case presupposes extreme unhappiness, amounting to despair, in the person concerned. A house at Clifton Hampden in Oxfordshire was haunted for many years by the ghost of Sarah Fletcher, who hanged herself from the curtain-rod in her bedroom in 1799, when she was only 29 years old. She is traditionally said to have been driven to suicide by the news that her husband, a naval officer then away from home, was planning a bigamous marriage with another woman. No mention is made of this in the report of the inquest printed in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for 15 June 1799, but we are told that 'the derangement of her mind appearing very evident, as well as from many other circumstances, the jury, without hesitation, found a verdict – Lunacy.' It was thus made possible for her to be buried in Dorchester Abbey, where her tombstone can still be seen. Nevertheless, from then on her house at Clifton Hampden was haunted by her restless ghost.

In the mid-19th century it became a boys' school. At first, the children seem to have been unaware of the haunting, but some of the masters heard footsteps coming out of Sarah Fletcher's old room and going along a passage and down the stairs. One man said he had heard these steps coming down as he was going up, and had felt a cold wind passing him, but had seen nothing. In 1854, Edward Crake, the headmaster's son, heard some invisible person entering his bedroom during the night, seeming to hesitate, and then going out again. This happened on three successive nights; on the third occasion he followed the sounds into the passage and saw a young woman standing there. She wore a long black cloak and had a purple-red ribbon in her hair, which was auburn and curly. As he looked at her, she vanished. He saw her again several times during the following year and then, suddenly, the haunting ceased.

For ten years the house remained untroubled but in 1865 the manifestations began again as inexplicably as they had ended. Now, however, there was a difference. The ghost was seen by several people, including some of the boys, and extraordinary noises were heard, as of furniture being moved, doors opening, bells ringing, and iron laths being dropped on the floor. Edward Crake, who by now had become a clergyman, tried to exorcize the spirit but the effects were not lasting. The disturbances continued until, for this and other reasons, the school was moved elsewhere.

With the departure of the school, the more violent manifestations came to an end but the house remained uneasy and no one stayed long in it. At one time it was divided into cottages, and later it was used as an institution for girls. In *True Ghost Stories* (1936), Maude ffoulkes writes of a visit which she paid to this institution in 1913. Whilst waiting for the Matron, she saw in clear daylight the figure of a woman in a black cloak standing near her in the passage. The apparition looked at her for a few seconds with an expression of deep melancholy, and then vanished. The Matron, on being questioned, admitted that odd noises were heard in the house but supposed this was natural in an old building. She added that she had never seen anything unusual herself, and though she knew that queer rumours circulated in the village, she preferred to ignore them. Since then, the house has once again become a private dwelling. No ghostly sights or sounds have been reported there for some years now and it is possible that the haunting has faded out at last.

Groaning Skulls

At Burton Agnes in Yorkshire a human skull is said to have been bricked up in some part of the walls in order to prevent its removal from the house. Tradition says that whenever it has been moved in the past, violent noises and disturbances have immediately broken out, and continued until it was brought back. This house was built by Sir Henry Griffith in the early 17th century and passed after his death to his three daughters, one of whom, Anne, was passionately attached to it. It is her skull which is now walled up there. She died while still young as the result of injuries received in an attack made upon her by footpads on the Harpham road. In her last moments, she made her sisters promise that her head should not be buried with the rest of her remains, but should be separated from them and kept in the house. When, perhaps understandably, they failed to keep this promise, life was made hideous for them by nightly outbreaks of extraordinary and terrifying noises, including groans, crashes and the violent slamming of doors. On the advice of the local clergyman, the head was removed from the grave and brought into the house, where it has remained ever since, except on a few occasions when someone has ejected it, with the same result as before. It was to prevent any unbelieving busybody from moving it again that it was buried in the walls, though its exact position in them has now been forgotten.

Burton Agnes is not the only old house in which the skull of some former inhabitant is, or was, carefully preserved because of a legend that it is unsafe to remove it. When Theophilus Brome of Higher Chilton Farm in Somerset died in 1670, he required his heir to detach the head from his corpse before the funeral, and to keep it permanently in the house. His reasons for this demand are not known; but that a skull kept in a cabinet in the hall was his appears quite likely because, when his grave in Chilton Cantelo Church was opened some 70 or 80 years after his death, the skeleton was found to be headless. Collinson, in his *History of Somerset* (1791), remarks that several later tenants attempted to bury it, but were always forced to restore it to its place by 'horrid noises portentive of sad displeasure.'

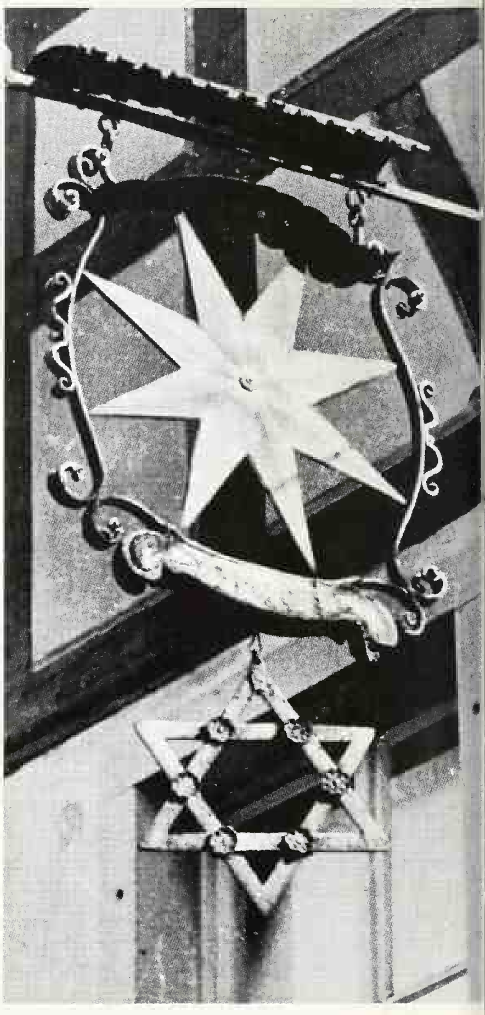
At Bettiscombe Manor in Dorset an imperfect skull, now sealed up for safety, is supposed to be that of a Negro servant who died there of consumption in the early 18th century. If this is so, it is not easy to understand why it should have been retained in the house in the beginning. It can hardly be imagined that this exiled West Indian can have wished it for himself. Nevertheless, every attempt to shift it, even to give it Christian burial, is said to have been instantly followed, not only by the usual disturbances indoors, but also by serious bad luck on the farm.

At Tunstead Farm, near Chapel-en-le-Frith in Derbyshire, a skull, locally known as 'Dickie', was variously said to be that of Ned Dixon, a former owner, or of a woman whose ghost haunted the house in visible form. In both versions of the tale, the cause of death was murder, though the details of the crime were only vaguely remembered. This skull, like the others, resented removal and retaliated in the same distressing manner, but it also had some less usual habits. It gave warning, by sounds varying from gentle tapping to loud thuds and clatterings, of an impending death in the family, or any emergency requiring the farmer's attention in the lambing season, or when a cow was calving, and of the approach of strangers. These last it disliked intensely, so much so that, on more than one occasion, Irish labourers, brought in for haymaking and housed in the outbuildings, were kept awake at night by constant and inexplicable noises. In *Wilmslow Graves* (1886), Alfred Fryer records that he was told of the skull's activities by the farmer himself and tha the latter spoke of the occurrences, not a traditions of the past, but as part of hi own direct experience.

It is not always, and indeed rarely, possible to find evidence that would satisf the Society for Psychical Research for storie of this type. They are nevertheless extremel interesting, not only because the presenc of skulls in houses is itself a curious fact but also because the tales seem to be roote in concepts of great antiquity. Bones, lik blood, were once believed to be the centre o psychic power and to retain a kind of life an consciousness after the death of thei original owners. This is especially true o skulls. In some cases, these gruesome relic were regarded as guardians of the house

Many houses are said to be haunted, generall by ghosts who are bound to their old home by strong emotional ties *Below left* I *The Ghost Goes West* Robert Donat playe a long-dead Scotsman who accompanied hi old home to the United States *Below* In th 16th century Emperor Maximilian of Austri always sent a party of guards ahead of hi when travelling, to make sure there wer no ghosts in the hotel he intended to sta in overnight; this eight-pointed star abov the Star of David, outside an inn in Wes Germany, is one of many that were erecte as 'all clear' signals *Facing page* 'Haunting have been scientifically investigated fo many years': Benson Herbert, who ha constructed machines designed to detec ghosts, in his paraphysical laboratory

National Film Archive



that contained them. 'Dickie' certainly acted as a protector of his home, and it may be that both Theophilus Brome and Anne Griffith had some such idea in mind when they made their strange and inconvenient requests. A ghost which is commonly supposed to be that of the latter has occasionally been seen at Burton Agnes, in the form of a small woman in a fawn-coloured gown.

Finally, one last paranormal appearance may be mentioned, out of the many hundreds available, because of the extraordinary nature of the apparition. It was seen in 1817 by Edmund Lenthal Swifte and his wife, when he was Keeper of the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London, and lived with his family in the Jewel House. The Tower is, of course, haunted by many known ghosts but this was not one of them. According to his own account, published in 1860 in *Notes and Queries*, Mr Swifte, his wife, his little son and his sister-in-law were all at supper one night in a curtained and candlelit room, with the doors closed. He and Mrs Swifte both saw something like a cylindrical glass tube, filled with a dense and moving liquid, hovering between the table and the ceiling. It moved slowly round the room and, passing behind Mrs Swifte, paused above her for a moment, whereupon she crouched down in terror and cried out, 'Oh Christ! It has seized me!' Her husband struck at it with a chair and hit the wainscot behind it, the apparition vanishing as he did so. It was not seen again and the most minute enquiries failed to produce any rational explanation. The other two people in the room saw nothing from first to last. The whole thing might indeed be written off as a delusion on Mr Swifte's part but for the fact that his wife saw it as clearly as he did, and was terrified by it. As it is, the manifestation remains as inexplicable today in its nature, origin and purpose, as it was in 1817.

(See also BORLEY RECTORY; GHOSTS; POLTERGEISTS; SKULL.)

CHRISTINA HOLE

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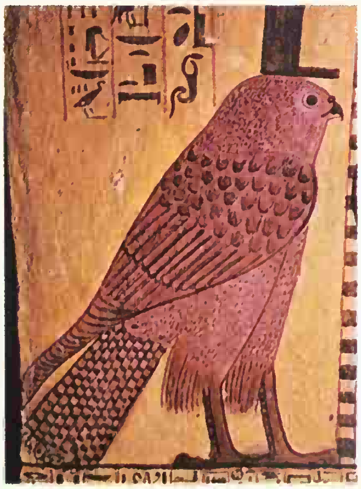
Peter Goodliffe/Paraphysical Laboratory



S. Gooders

Hawk

Like the eagle and falcon, hawks are frequently connected with the sun in symbolism, because of their flight, dominating ferocity and yellow eyes: the sparrowhawk belonged to Horus in Egypt and was a solar bird in Greece and Rome: the kite was sacred to Apollo as lord of the Delphic oracle, because circling in the sky it sees everything; in Japan there was a divine golden kite, Nihongi

HAWTHORN

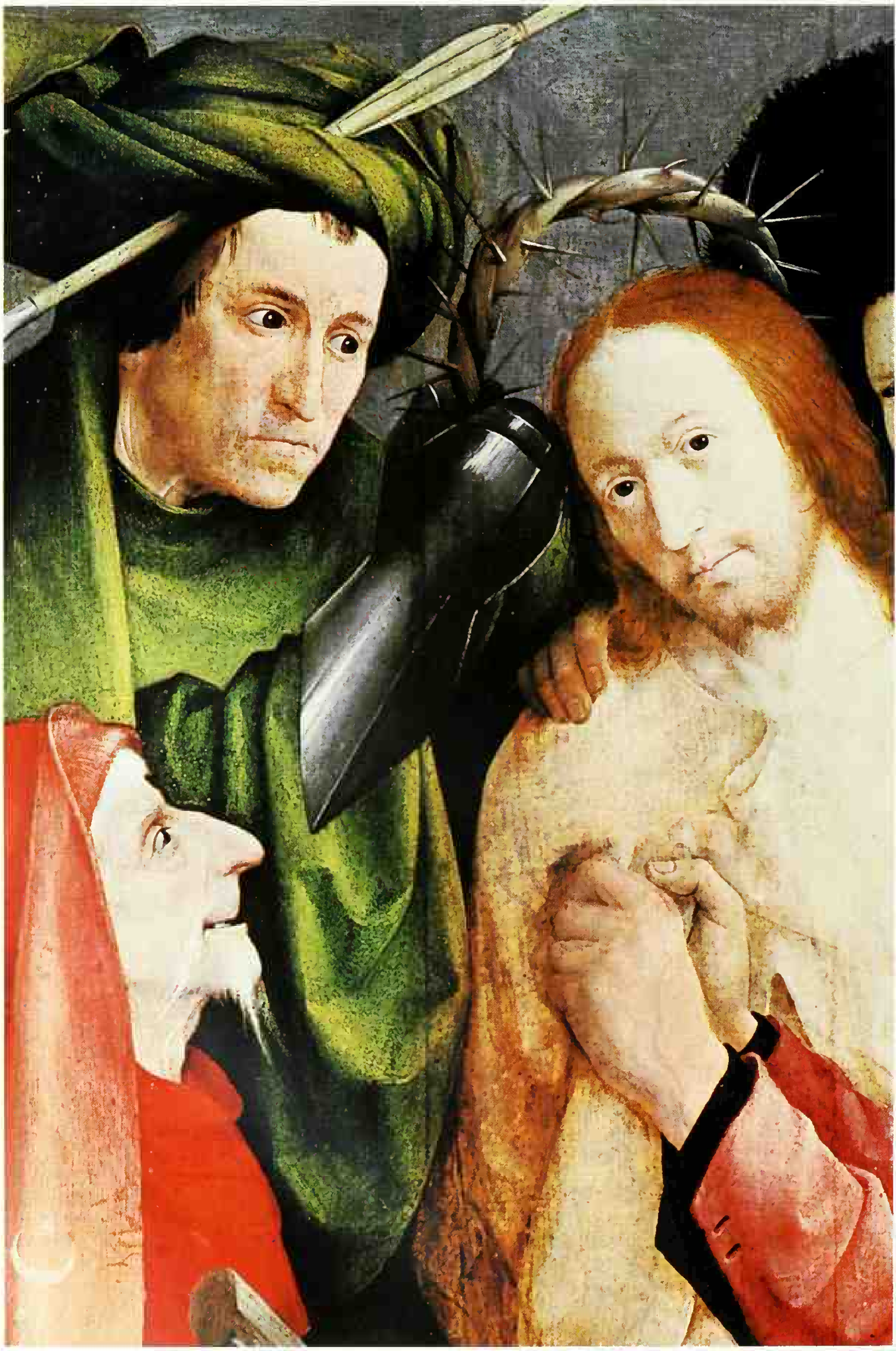
MAY DAY was originally an agricultural festival, the beginning of summer, and the may, hawthorn or whitethorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) became its foremost plant emblem. At many festivals it was believed that witches and fairies were especially active on this day and farm produce in particular had to be protected against otherworld influences. Although in Ireland and Scotland the rowan or mountain ash answered these purposes, in England and France the most important of many plants associated with May Day was the hawthorn. In some places trees were cut down and set before houses (see also MAY DAY).

Spencer and Shakespeare both mentioned the May Day festivities and the may tree's use; perhaps the most charming contemporary evocation is that of Herrick, in 'Corinna Going a-Maying', a poem published in 1648:

> How each field turns a street, each street
> a park
> Made green and trimm'd with trees: see how
> Devotion gives each house a bough,
> Or branch: each porch, each door, ere this,
> An ark, a tabernacle is,
> Made up of whitethorn neatly enterwove . . .

The last line quoted refers to the importance of weaving magical plants into circlets or crosses, which increased their power. Herrick's poem goes on to describe lovers plighting their troth, for May Day was the best moment for engagements; in France hawthorn adorned girls' windows in particular. Geoffrey Grigson has remarked that 'the stale, sweet scent' of the hawthorn blossom was suggestive of sex (although also suggestive of decay, and it was later believed that the flowers preserved London's plague-smell).

To the Greeks the hawthorn has long been a symbol of betrothal. In ancient times, if possible, its boughs in bloom were carried by attendants at weddings, and torches of hawthorn lit the newly married couple to their room. Till quite recently, and possibly still today in some places, Greek brides wore hawthorn wreaths. In Britain during the last century hawthorn was used in various forms of marriage divination. Norfolk girls bringing home May Day branches had to remain silent, because if they uttered a word they would not marry that year.



Michael Holford

In France it was believed that Christ's Crown of Thorns was made of hawthorn, and Norman peasants wore a sprig in their caps: *The Crowning of Thorns* by Hieronymus Bosch, in the National Gallery, London

Flowers of Death

As with many magical plants, churchmen came to terms with pagan hawthorn and allowed it into their churches, both literally on May Day and in carved ornament, where the plant can still be seen, in company with carvings of the Green Man (see GREEN) with branches sprouting from his ears or hornlike from his head. There is an entry in the Reading churchwardens' accounts for 1499 for 'the gathering of Robin Hood' which takes us straight back to the Green Man, alias Jack-in-the-Green, alias the May King, and the ancient notion of a tree spirit.

The use of hawthorn on May Day, involving much cutting of the tree, is in curious contrast to considerations still existing here and there that it is unlucky to cut down a hawthorn. Anyone who had to do this, however, could be protected by having a Bible close by, offering a prayer, or by initially asking permission of the fairies.

Naturally enough, hawthorn had protective power against evil at all times, especially if picked with certain rituals or on specific days, which varied according to locality. It has been suggested that its supernatural powers as well as its thorns made it a recommended hedge plant (haw is an ancient word for hedge) and that its use for walking sticks derived equally from its magical properties.

But hawthorn could turn on you; it is still widely believed to be unlucky, to the point of bringing death, to bring its flowers into the house. This seems to be a fairly modern superstition. And, as in many similar cases, the fact that hawthorn protects against fairies associated it with these spirits. This made it unwise to sit under a hawthorn on days when fairy activity was to be expected, such as May Day, Midsummer Eve and Hallowe'en. To do so courted the risk of enchantment. Despite this it was generally advisable to shelter beneath a thorn in a storm, for the hawthorn safeguarded against lightning.

A rather comical use of hawthorn by witches is as one ingredient of a sleeping potion which they gave their husbands on nights when they wished to be abroad.

As with other solitary trees, a single hawthorn – 'Lone Thorn' or 'Fairy Thorn' it was called – was particularly to be avoided, for fairies met or even lived there. In Ireland, however, it was customary to plant a single hawthorn above holy wells, on which the locals still leave offerings of pieces of clothing – as on fig trees in Palestine – to ensure recovery from illness or fulfilment of wishes.

In France it was until recently believed that hawthorn composed the Crown of Thorns. Norman peasants would wear a sprig of the tree in their caps as appropriate reverence. A Herefordshire farmers' custom connected with this belief was that of the hawthorn globe. This ball of hawthorn twigs was made on New Year's Day. Each year, before dawn, the old globe would be taken down. While the women made a new one the men took the old globe to their fields, and, in a ceremony called Burning the Bush, carried it aflame over the wheatfield or burnt it on a bonfire. Because the hawthorn globe stood for the Crown of Thorns, its burning would drive the Devil – in the shape of the wheat smut disease – from the farmland.

The Crown of Thorns link is seen again in the manifestation of the Glastonbury Thorn (see GLASTONBURY). This was, and is, a freak hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna praecox*) which flowered in late December as well as in May. Legend has it that its Christmas flowering occurred because it had been the Crown of Thorns. Another legend was that Joseph of Arimathea thrust his magic hawthorn staff into the ground on reaching sacred Glastonbury, where it grew. The three original Glastonbury Thorns are there no longer, but this old form propagated by cuttings, can be purchased.

In the Victorian language of flowers, hawthorn stood for hope, while in the Turkish equivalent the gift of a hawthorn twig expressed the wish for a kiss.

A. J. HUXLEY

Hazel is a particularly powerful tree in magic, used to make magic wands and divining rods. The wands of Moses and Aaron were traditionally made of hazel, and its branches were used as lightning conductors

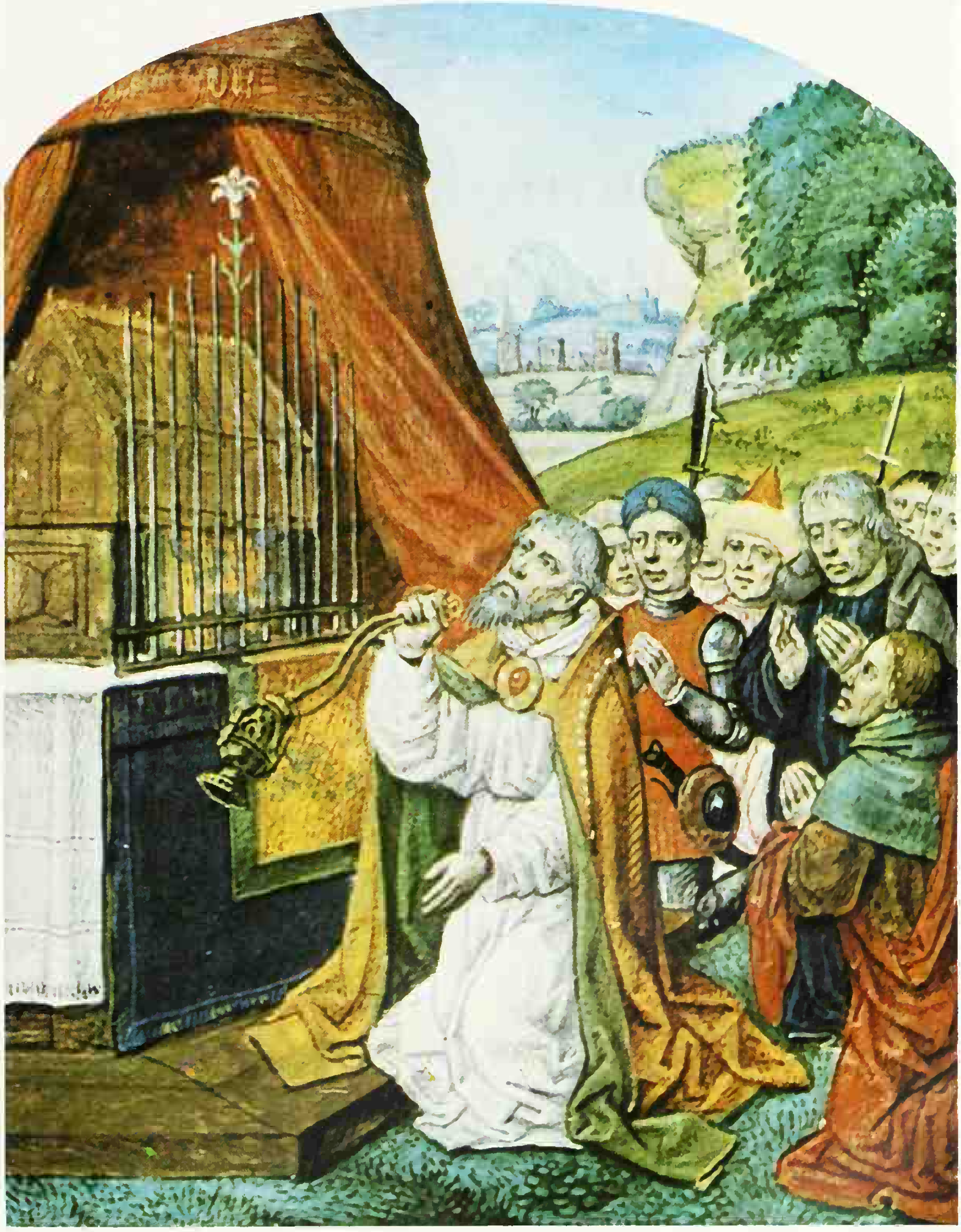
HAZEL

THE WANDS of priest and magician are as ancient as mythology itself; there are references to them in Chaldean and Egyptian records. Hazel *(Corylus avellana)* was one of the main plants to be used for wands, and also for royal sceptres. It is to be found as such in Hebrew, classical and Nordic mythology; in Scandinavia it was sacred to Thor, and a protection against lightning. The Romans believed that Mercury was given a hazel rod by Apollo, which he used to calm human passions and improve their virtues. This ancient heraldic staff, or *caduceus*, was imagined as intertwined with serpents and bearing a pair of wings at the top, and was taken over by Aesculapius to become the symbol of the medical profession.

Pilgrims carried hazel rods which they would retain all their lives and which were buried with them. Such staves have been found in Hereford Cathedral.

On a more practical plane the hazel was used in divination, and we find Pliny explaining its use for the discovery of subterranean springs. It was widely believed to assist in finding metal deposits and buried treasure, and to this day the water diviner will carry out his scientifically belittled but undoubtedly effective occupation with a forked hazel twig (see DOWSING). Divining rods were even used for tracking criminals.

In the 17th century Sir Thomas Browne wrote of the 'forked hazel, commonly called Moses' Rod, which, held freely forth, will stir and play if any mine be under it.' He mentions 'the magical rods in poets – that of Pallas, in Homer; that of Mercury, that charmed Argus; and that of Circe, which transformed the followers of Ulysses: too boldly usurping the name of Moses' rod; from which, notwithstanding, and that of Aaron, were probably occasioned the fables of all the rest. For that of Moses must needs be famous to the Egyptians, and that of Aaron unto many other nations, as



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Hazel wands were used for royal sceptres, and traditionally the rods of Moses and Aaron, like those of other priests and magicians, were made of hazel. Illustration from a late 15th century Book of Hours, showing the miraculous blossoming of Aaron's rod which has grown a lily, symbol of purity

A hazel rod is the traditional tool of dowsers: an Austrian diviner searches for gold in Wales

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

being preserved in the Ark until the destruction of the Temple built by Solomon.'

Hebrew tradition traces the rod of Moses from one originally cut by Adam in the Garden of Eden, taken by Noah into the Ark, passed down to Shem, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, given to Joseph and to Moses. Unfortunately, modern translators often turn these hazel wands into almond rods.

The making of a magic wand was inevitably attended by ritual. An old Hebrew tradition stipulates the use of a 'virgin branch' – a young growth with no side-shoots upon it. Divining rods were also cut under very special conditions. They had to be made at night on holy days such as Good Friday, St John's Day, Epiphany or Shrove Tuesday. They could also be made on the first night of a new moon or on the previous night. The cutter had to face east, the rod had to be cut from the eastern side of the tree, and the freshly cut rod had then to be presented to the rays of the rising sun.

There are many lesser beliefs connected with hazel. It was anciently held in Germany to be symbolic of immortality, perhaps because of its end-of-winter flowering. More recently it was linked with happiness in marriage, a belief arising from the paired nuts; at Black Forest weddings the leader of the procession would carry a hazel wand. In medieval England the hazel nut symbolized fertility.

Ireland's lack of poisonous snakes is attributed to St Patrick who, holding a hazel rod, caused all the snakes to come together, and then cast them into the sea. In Ireland, incidentally, the hazel becomes the Tree of Knowledge. In Sweden the hazel nut was believed to confer invisibility, in Bohemia to cure fevers, in Ireland (a nut in the pocket) to keep off rheumatism, and in Devonshire (a double nut) to cure toothache. One amusing tradition is that a piece of hazel cut at midnight on Hallowe'en will, if carried in the pocket, prevent its owner from falling over, however drunk he may be.

Hazel was generally efficacious against the machinations of witches, fairies and evil in general, not merely as a protector but, in the form of a rod, as a positive means of forcing evil spirits to restore things or powers they had taken. This could be extended to human enemies: a hazel rod cut on Good Friday or St John's Eve, if swished through the air with appropriate naming of the victim, would cause him appropriate pain wherever he was. The Scots would keep double nuts handy to throw at witches. The hazel rod was used to protect animal feeds and grain in general; in Prussia, a rod cut in spring was used, during the first summer thunderstorm, to make the sign of the cross over all stored grain.

Lightning Rod

To pick hazel nuts on a Sunday was to risk the Devil appearing before you. This belief probably derives from older associations with specific demons, elves or boggarts who guard hazels – the Churn-milk Peg from Yorkshire, the Melsh Dick of the north country, or the Hind Etin, whose activities are celebrated in a fine antique ballad. When May Margret comes to the copse to pick hazel nuts:

> She had na pic'd a nut, a nut,
> A nut but barely ane,
> Till up started the Hynde Etin,
> Says, Lady, let thae alane.

But after threatening to kill her, he is taken by her beauty, marries her and they have children to the magic number of seven.

Branches bearing catkins (lambs'-tails) and kept in water at farmers' houses at lambing time would help the sheep; branches picked on Palm Sunday and similarly kept would protect the house against lightning. This lightning protection could extend to fire-proofing a house if three hazel dowels were fixed into its beams.

In Wales a cap or wreath of hazel twigs would bring luck to its wearer, and protection from shipwreck if he was a sailor. In Scotland it was customary to give infants born in nutting time a 'milk' made from the nuts to ensure health and good fortune.

Like many another plant with ancient pagan associations, hazel was 'Christianized'. The medieval Normans decreed that it should be known as the nut of St Philibert, a Benedictine monk of the 7th century, originally a nut-grower, who founded a famous abbey. From this we find the English filbeard or filbert. St Philibert's feast day is on 22 August, when hazel nuts should be ripe.

In more recent time the nuts were used in divination of a different kind from that of the rod. A girl, wishing to know if her lover was faithful, placed two nuts side by side on the bars of the grate. If they burnt as one, true love was assured but if one failed to burn, or the nuts popped apart, her lover was surely faithless. A charm that accompanies double nuts of various kinds – like the almond – was to share a double hazel nut with whoever you wished would love you. If the other person ate the kernel as you ate yours, in silence, the charm was a sure one. A nut with two kernels in one shell, as opposed to the double nut, was especially magical. The finder of such a nut made a wish, eating one kernel and throwing the other over his left shoulder. He had to maintain silence until someone asked him a question to which he could reply 'yes'. Wishes would also be granted if a hazel nut, thrown into the fire, flared up brightly as the wish was repeated to oneself.

To dream of hazel trees, and especially of eating the nuts, means happiness and wealth, and to dream of finding hidden nuts means the finding of treasure (perhaps the divining rod in reverse). If an Irishman dreamt of finding buried treasure he would dig for it after marking three crosses on a hazel stick to the accompaniment of a blasphemous formula. In the language of flowers, hazel stands for reconciliation.
(See also WAND.)

A. J. HUXLEY

Jørgen Bitsch

Mongolian devil-mask: since prehistoric times the head and the skull have been thought to contain the essential being, the personality, and therefore the power of a human being or a spirit

HEAD

Belief in the healing power of water drunk from an ancestor's skull survived into this century n Scotland: this is one example of the conviction that the human head contains powerful magic, which comes out particularly strongly in he headhunting of primitive peoples and in the role of the head in Celtic religion.

HEADHUNTING is based on the belief that he human head has magical powers of great potency, which benefit those in possession of a skull severed from someone's body. The motives for the practice are diverse and complex, however, and the cultural implications differ from region to region. In colonial erritories headhunting was suppressed wherever an effective administration was stablished. But even in the first half of the 20th century there were still many populations addicted to the custom of capturing heads, and various anthropologists have been able to observe the accompanying rites and ceremonies. Today organized headhunting raids are confined to a few remote regions, but rites previously connected with headhunting are sometimes performed as a sequel to individual cases of homicide.

In Southeast Asia headhunting was widespread among tribal populations which had remained outside the spheres of Hindu, Buddhist and Moslem civilizations, including many of the hill tribes of Assam and Burma, the aboriginals of Taiwan, the mountain peoples of Luzon in the Philippines, and some of the more archaic peoples of Borneo, Celebes and Sumatra. All these

populations practise agriculture and there is a deep-seated belief that the capture of heads has a beneficial influence on the fertility of the soil and on the growth of crops. Human blood is considered a substance capable of promoting fertility (see BLOOD), and both headhunting and human sacrifice served to ensure good harvests. Additional incentives for the capture of heads were the prestige gained by successful headhunters and the desire to avenge the losses of one's own clan or village by killing enemies and bringing in their heads as trophies.

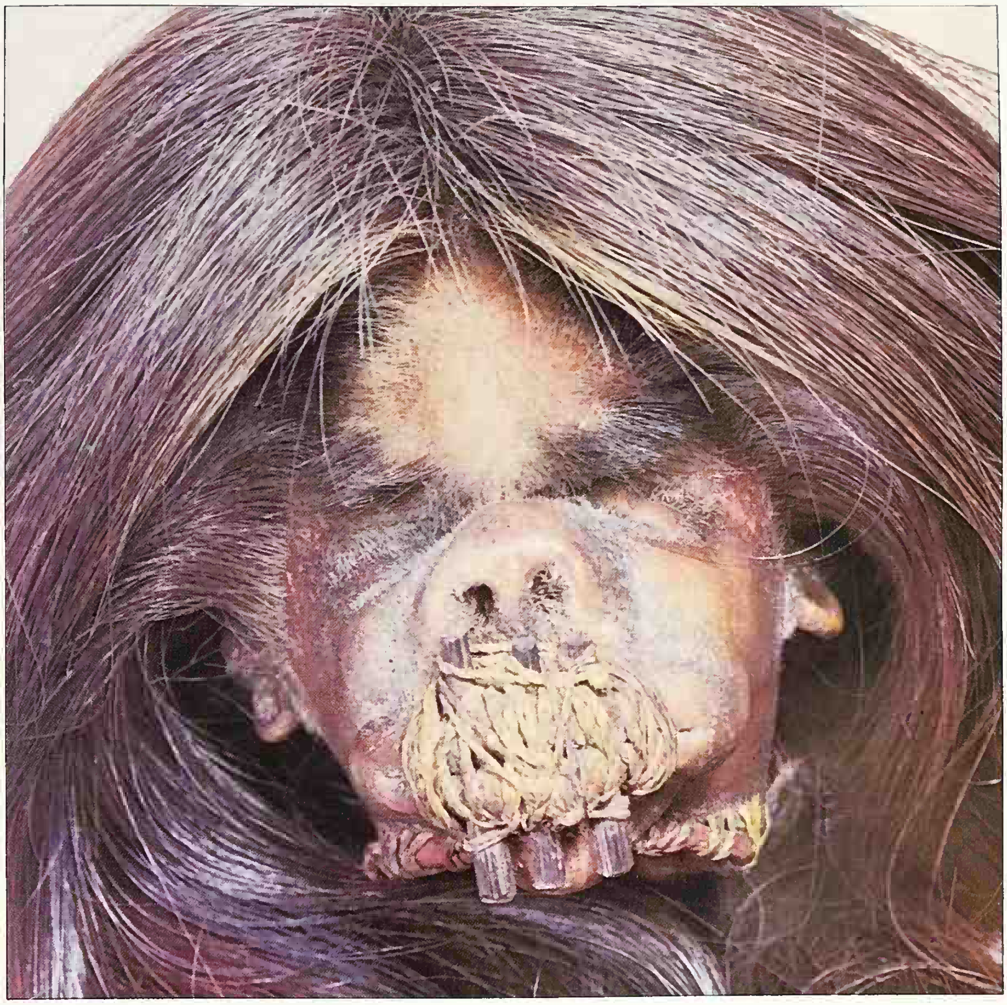
Among such tribes as the Nagas of the Assam-Burma borderlands (see also NAGAS) the wish to capture heads was the cause of many feuds between villages which otherwise had no conflicting interests. Only in exceptional cases did warriors set out on a raid with the intention of wiping out an opposing village. The main aim of raiding was the capture of heads. These were carefully preserved, and there was a definite belief that their presence enhanced the fertility and prosperity of the village. To maintain their magical power they were fed with rice-beer at all village feasts. The sex, age and status of the victims had little relevance. Old people, women and children would be killed as occasion offered, and the capture of their heads earned the slayer scarcely less prestige than the killing of armed warriors. Those who were keen on acquiring a head without risking their own lives, could buy slaves who were killed.

When the head of a victim was brought t the captor's village, all the men of the villag turned out to welcome the headhunters. Th first rites were performed outside the village The captured head was put down and th senior man of the captor's clan smashed rav eggs on the head; this was meant to blind th kinsmen of the dead foe. A clan elder the poured rice-beer into the mouth and in doin so addressed the victim with the request t call his relatives and kinsmen, in orde that they too might be compelled to com and fall victim to the spears of the victoriou tribesmen.

The head was then carried into the villag and tied to a large log gong, which wa beaten in a rhythm announcing the captur of a head. There was dancing and singin

Captured heads were thought to enhance the prosperity of a village; the Naga tribes used to feed the heads with rice-beer to maintain their magical powers

Headhunting is based on the belief that the human head contains powerful magic. The taker of a head is given some mark of distinction, like the tiger's teeth worn by this headhunter of Borneo *(left)* The Jivaro Indians believed that the possession of a shrunken head *(right)* would ensure good luck for the owner



Michael Holford/Horniman Museum

most of the night, and next day all the men of the village dressed in ceremonial clothes and painted their bodies and faces with lime. The head was carried in procession to an upright stone standing in a ritual place. There a priest cut off small pieces of the ears and tongue, and called again on the kinsmen of the dead man or woman. He killed a chicken and sprinkling its blood on the stone repeated the incantation. Next the head was taken to a tree and hung up there to dry.

About a month later a great feast was celebrated to mark the final disposal of the head, which was taken down from the tree and fed once more with rice and beer. Finally it was deposited either in the community house or the ancestral house of the headtaker.

Some of the Naga tribes believed that the victim of a headtaker remained close to the killer until the latter's death. Then he would accompany the headtaker to the land of the dead, where he became his servant or slave. Most Naga tribes were firmly convinced that the capturing of heads was essential for the well-being of a village and that a community which failed over a period of years to bring in a head would suffer a decline in prosperity. The capture of a head gave a Naga the right to a special tattoo on the chest and face. Among some Naga tribes a youth was not considered fully adult until he had participated in a headhunting raid, and among other tribes a sham raid, imitating the incidents of a headhunting expedition, formed part of the initiation rites for adolescent boys.

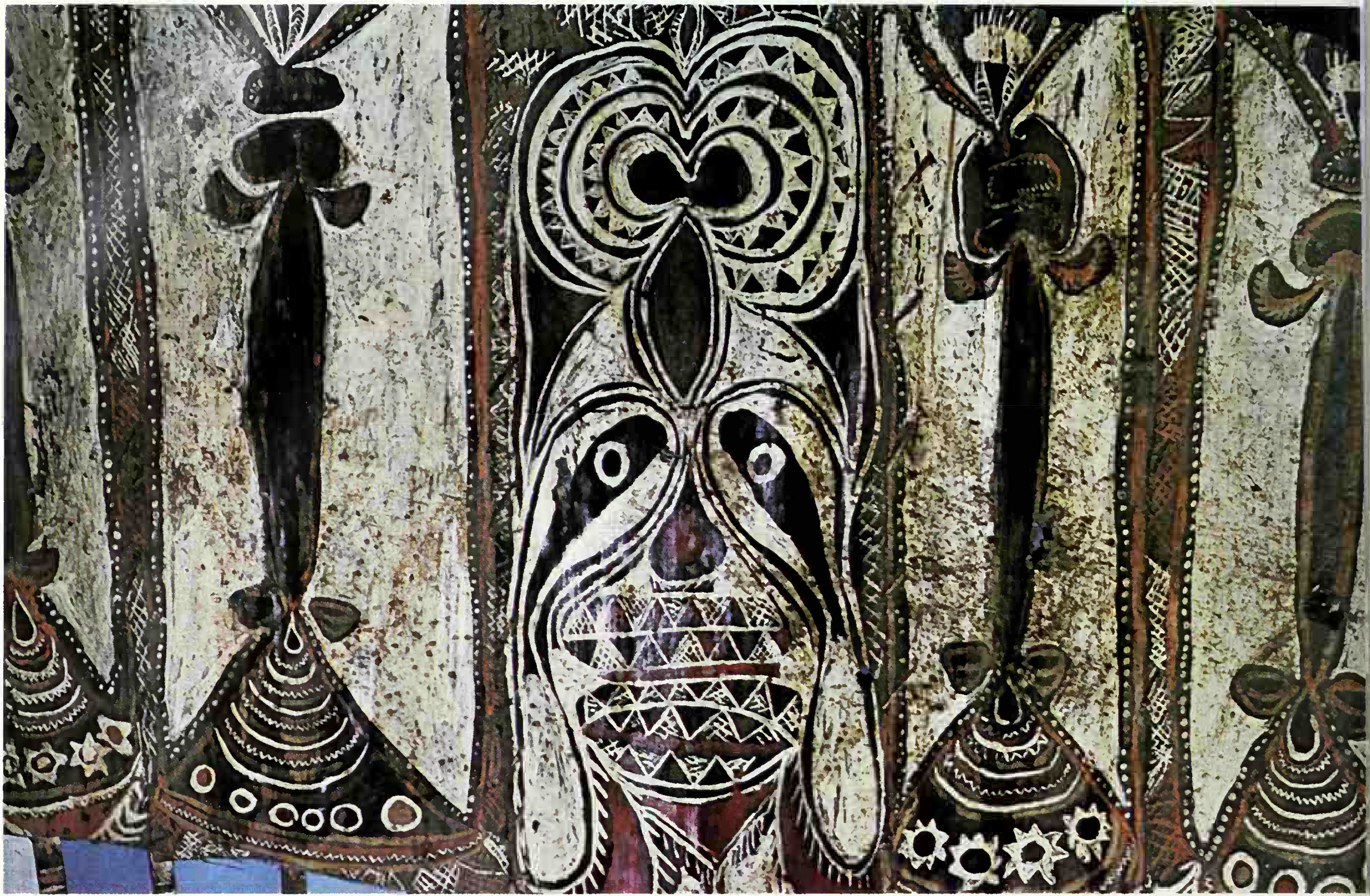
The Cherished Heads

Several hill-tribes of Assam and Burma and some of the tribes in the interior of Borneo considered the taking of a head a necessary precondition for the termination of mourning for a dead chief. The captured heads were placed on the tomb, or alternatively slaves would be killed to provide the chief with servants in the land of the dead. Here headhunting and human sacrifice were closely linked and intended to serve similar purposes.

Among the Dayaks of Borneo heads were captured and preserved mainly in order to obtain the helpful presence and power of the spirit adhering to the head. At the feast celebrating the capture endearments were lavished upon the head and food was thrust into its mouth. Its spirit was told that he was adopted into the captor's tribe, and must henceforth hate his old kinsmen and friends.

The Kayans of Borneo dried and smoked captured heads in a specially made small hut. Then they were solemnly installed in the house of the captor, hung up over the main hearth on a beam on which old heads were hanging. At all times the heads were treated respectfully and somewhat fearfully. The fire beneath them was always kept alight so that they should be warm and dry. On certain occasions pork and beer were offered to them, and their presence in the house was believed to bring prosperity, especially in the form of good crops (see also BORNEO).

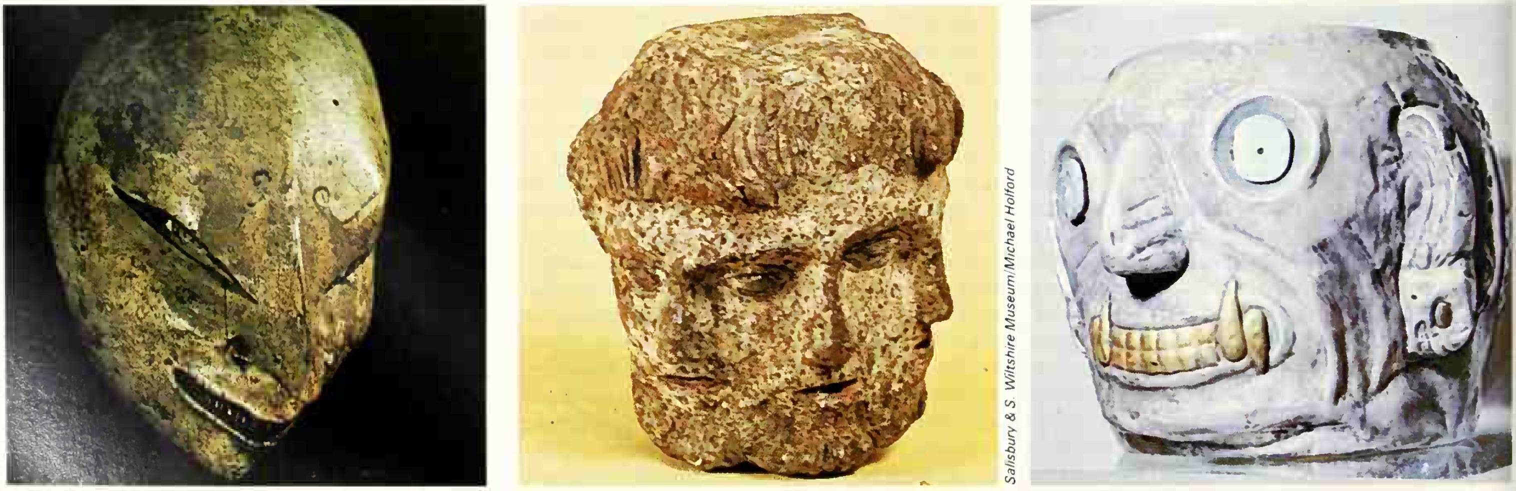
In the Philippines headhunting used to be practised by such tribes as Ifugaos, Kalingas, Igorots and Ilongots. Usually raiding-parties were organized with the intention of taking revenge for an injury suffered by a village or kin-group. The warriors armed with spears, head-axes and shields stole into enemy territory, carefully avoiding pit-falls and traps set up by all villages as a protection.



Above Guardian spirit, represented by its head, from the Sepik River country in New Guinea. Headhunting was common until recently there. *Below* By altering the look of a head, a mask changes the man who wears it into someone or something else: masks from Java and Peru (*left and right*). The human head was supremely important to the Celts throughout their history and across Europe; they actually worshipped it as the repository of the human soul. The icon of the head therefore must have served as a symbol for their religious beliefs in much the same way that the cross came to symbolize Christian beliefs. Their cult of the head left traces behind it for centuries afterwards: copy of a triple head, presumably representing the Trinity as 'three-in-one', in Salisbury Cathedral, c 14th century (*centre*)

Open encounters with the enemy were avoided as far as possible but lone travellers or wood-cutters were easy victims. The raiders would swoop down on the defenceless or out-numbered victim, and the head was quickly severed and carried home in triumph.

The returning warriors were greeted with shouts of joy and preparations for the rituals and festivities began at once. Pigs were slaughtered and food prepared. The skull caps might be removed from the captured heads, the brains mixed with sugar-cane beer and consumed by the warriors. The head was then boiled and the bones and broken bits of the skull distributed among the participants. The most potent and highly prized part of the skull was the lower jaw, and jaw-bones were used as handles of metal gongs. Anyone participating in a successful headhunting expedition, not only the actual killer, was entitled to a special very extensive tattoo covering chest and arms. Occasionally young women accompanied small raiding-parties and helped them by carrying supplies. These women were given a share of the captured heads and were accorded the right to a special tattoo. There was a widespread belief that taking of the life of an enemy would cure childlessness and result in general prosperity. But the overt motives for capturing heads were the desire to retaliate for injuries suffered, to even the score when the community had lost a life through illness or accident, and above all to gain prestige and status. A record of many killings made a man feared and respected



Salisbury & S. Wiltshire Museum/Michael Holford

The Celts worshipped the human head and believed that in it lay the soul, the essence of being, the reflection of divinity

and earned him the title of 'brave warrior'.

It is likely that in the past the termination of the period of mourning for a deceased kinsman was the occasion for a headhunting raid. Even today the Kalingas indicate the end of mourning by staging a symbolic raid. A party of men in war-attire proceeds to the border of the village-land and throws spears at a figure made of ferns. They then return to the village with chants of triumph similar o those marking the return from a successful headhunting raid.

Skull Trophies

The ritual use of head trophies was not confined to the headhunting tribes of Southeast Asia but occurred also in other parts of the world. In the Solomon Islands, for nstance, skulls of enemies were set up on a post when a canoe was launched, and canoe houses were decked with skulls. The heads of slain enemies were prominently displayed by certain African peoples: in Dahomey they were placed on the roofs or the gates of the king's palace.

The practice of preserving as a trophy the head or some other part of the body of an enemy is very widespread in South America. A great variety of psychological, social and religious motives underly the taking and preparation of these trophies, which may be classified into four main types: skulls; mummified heads; shrunken heads; and skull caps. The most famous of these trophies are the shrunken heads of the Jivaro Indians, who severed the heads of slain enemies, smashed the skulls and extracted the bone-fragments through an ncision. The remaining flesh, skin and scalp were dried till they shrank to the size of a small monkey's head. The possession of such a miniature head was believed to ensure good luck to the owner, first because it conained magic power, and secondly because it secured the good will of the ancestors whose desire for revenge was satisfied.

Early and recent accounts alike mention head trophies among the Amazon tribes. Among the Tupinamba, the skulls of enemies were stuck on posts in front of huts or on the palisades. The Shipay greatly valued the skulls of their enemies and hung them in nets from the roofs of huts. The trophy heads of he Munducucu are famous because of the skill with which they were prepared. After the brain and soft parts had been removed, they were plunged in oil and then exposed to the sun and to smoke. The empty sockets were filled with artificial eyes made of wax, and a carrying cord was laced through the lips.

The use of head trophies is reported also from many historic civilizations. The Babylonians and Assyrians cut off the heads of fallen enemies, and a similar custom prevailed in ancient Egypt where kings were depicted holding bundles of heads. The ancient Scythians also presented their king with the heads of slain enemies, and often attached scalps to their bridles.

Although headhunting in the narrow sense of the word was most highly developed in Southeast Asia, similar ritual practices involving the use of heads are found among a variety of peoples and cultures. However, there is a fundamental difference between the capture of heads undertaken primarily for the purpose of obtaining the powerful soul-substance adhering to the skull, and the temporary display of the heads of slain enemies as trophies and symbols of victory in battle. The latter custom occurred in many civilizations of very different nature, whereas headhunting for the sake of gaining magical powers is restricted to comparatively primitive societies in certain specific parts of the world.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

The Severed Head

The hero Peredur sees the Grail as a head:

Thereupon he could see two youths coming into the hall, and from the hall proceeding to a chamber, and with them a spear of exceeding great size, and three streams of blood along it, running from the socket to the floor. And when they all saw the youths coming after that fashion, every one set up a crying and a lamentation, so that it was not easy for any to bear with them. The man did not, for all that, interrupt his conversation with Peredur. The man did not tell Peredur what that was, nor did he ask it of him. After silence for a short while, thereupon, lo, two maidens coming in, and a great salver between them, and a man's head on the salver, and blood in profusion around the head. And then all shrieked and cried out, so that it was hard for any to be in the same house as they. At last they desisted therefrom, and sat as long as they pleased, and drank.

The Mabinogion (trans G. and T. Jones)

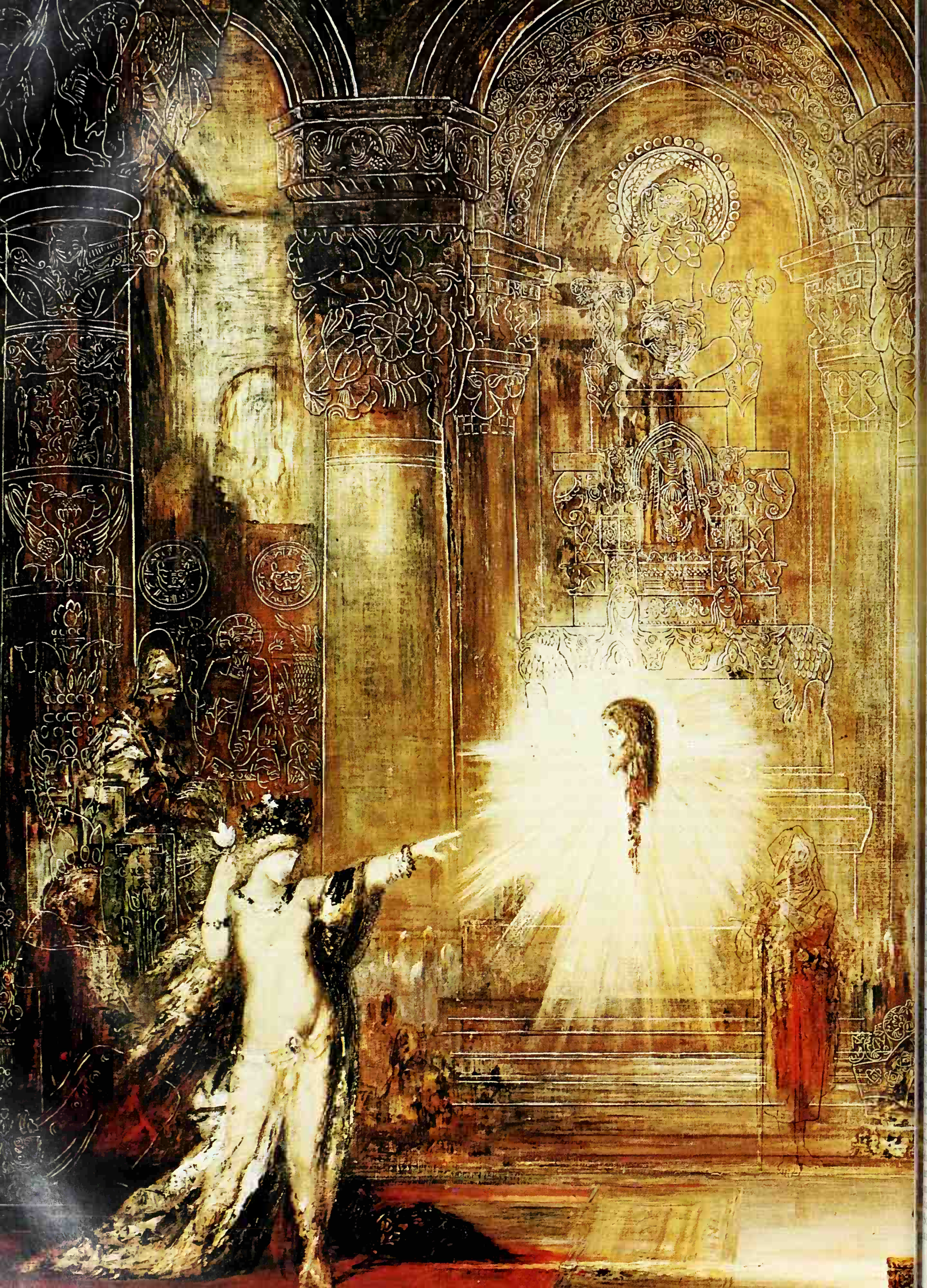
The Celts and the Head

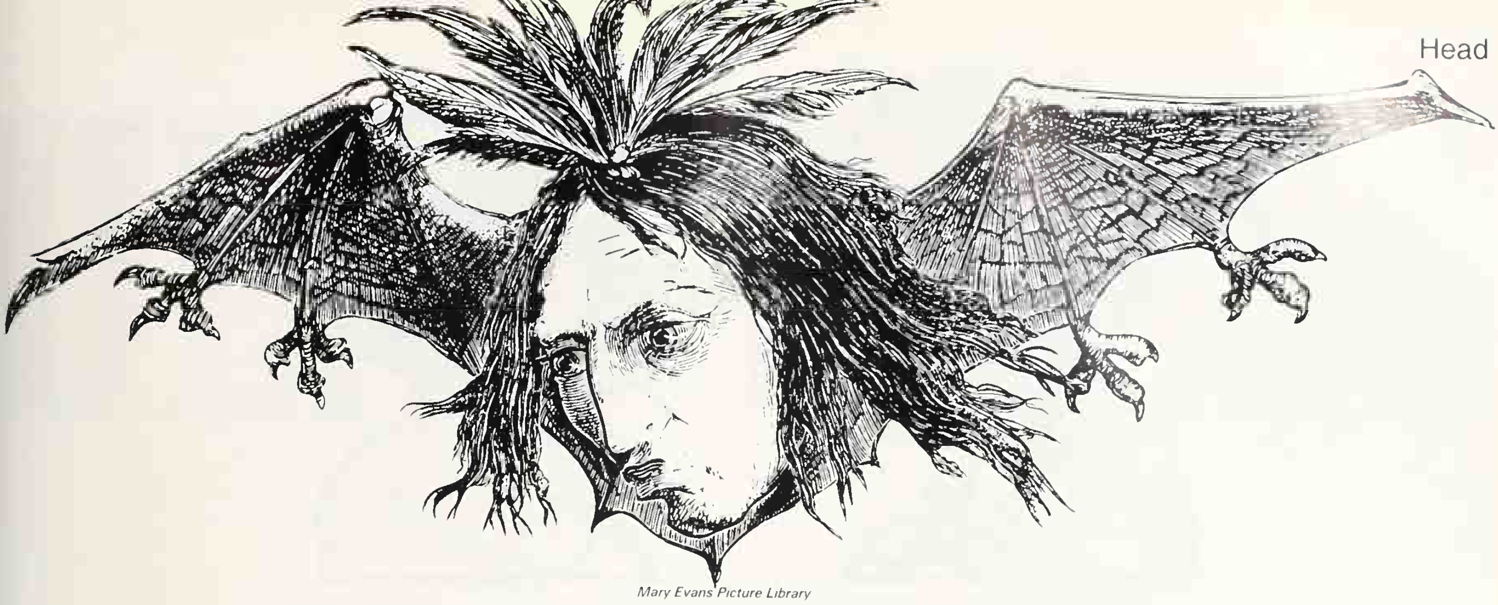
The human head was of supreme importance to the Celtic peoples at all stages of their evolution and can be said to have served as a symbol of their religious attitudes, in the same way that the sign of the cross symbolizes the Christian faith, or the crescent the Mohammedan. Not only did the Celts hunt the heads of their enemies, as did many other barbaric peoples, but they actually worshipped the human head, and believed that in it lay the soul, the essence of being, the reflection of divinity. They venerated real heads, and they fashioned imitation heads from a variety of materials, thousands of which are still in existence.

Individual deities were sometimes portrayed as heads alone, perhaps bearing some distinctive characteristic such as horns or animal ears, or having two, three or four heads. Again, the head was used simply as a symbol of the concept of divinity, a shorthand method of summing up a complete way of religious and superstitious thought.

The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) said of the Celts: 'When their enemies fall, they cut off their heads and fasten them about the necks of their horses . . . and carry them off as booty, singing a paean over them and striking up a song of victory, and these first fruits of battle they fasten by nails upon their houses . . . the heads of their most distinguished enemies they embalm in cedar oil and carefully preserve in a chest, and these they exhibit to strangers, gravely maintaining that in exchange for this head someone among their ancestors, or the speaker himself, refused the offer of a great sum of money. And some men among them, we are told, boast that they have not accepted an equal weight of gold for the head they show . . .' Human skulls recovered from the Celtic fort of Puig Castelar were found to have retained the actual nails from which they were hung. An altar from Apt dedicated to the war god had a deposit of human skulls buried underneath it. The Roman historian Livy (died 17 AD) comments on the Celtic custom of decorating human skulls with gold, and using them as cups for their libations.

Archeological evidence confirms this veneration of the human head. The stone temple at Roquepertuse, dating from the 2nd century BC or earlier, contains convincing evidence of the cult of the head in





Mary Evans Picture Library

eft: The severed head of John the Baptist ppears to Salome, in *L'Apparition* by the 9th century French painter Gustav Moreau. She demanded John's head on a charger and ook it as a trophy to her mother (Matthew, hapter 14) *Above* Human head with bat's vings, one of the fantastic creatures that eopled North American Indian mythology

his region of the lower Rhône. The portico vas surmounted by a great stone goose, a ird sacred to the Celts. Below was a frieze f horses, and niches in which human crania vere set; the human heads had all been aken from young men in the prime of life, nd were therefore presumably those of steemed enemies, offered to the appro-riate deities in the sanctuary.

Another temple of this kind, dating from he 2nd century BC, at Entremont, also in he lower Rhône region, tells the same story. There is a stone pillar decorated with human eads in relief, and several examples of evered heads, including one of a male head vith a mask-like appearance being gripped n a very sinister fashion by a large hand, erhaps a symbol of death.

The heads of the slain were sometimes ledicated to Taranis, 'the Thunderer', ne of the great Celtic gods. The 9th century rish glossary of Cormac refers to the hreefold goddess of war Macha. (She was ne of the three *Morrigna* or Morrigans, vith their crow or raven transformations.) Cormac glosses her name in this way: Macha, that is a crow; or it is one of the hree Morrigna. *Mesrad Machae*, Macha's nast, that is the heads of men after their laughter'. Thus the human head in Ireland vas regarded as this goddess's tribute.

The Mask of Protection

n Britain human skulls were found in he fortifications at Bredon Hill and at Stanwick, and their position suggests that hey had either been attached to poles eside the gateway or nailed onto the tructure of the gate itself. Heads feature a great deal on native Celtic coins, being reated with typical Celtic fantasy, having listorted or non-natural features, huge eyes and wild hair, and often showing tattooing n the cheeks and bearing, or being associated with, cult symbols such as the boar. Sometimes smaller heads are chained to a arger central head; some have horns, others are janiform (two-faced) or in triplicate.

A great many heads must have been made of wood (often oak) and although considerable numbers have undoubtedly perished enough survive, and are being found from time to time, to show that this must have been an important medium. The astonishing discovery in 1963 of 190 figures, all of oak heart-wood, at the Gallo-Roman sanctuary to the goddess Sequana at the source of the River Seine, contained 40 heads, and 16 pieces of wood carved with two or three heads. Again, several wooden heads were found in the Temple de la Fôret d'Halatte. So the Celts not only venerated actual human heads, but made images of them in stone, in wood and in metal. La Tène art contains endless variations on the theme of the human mask, often highly stylized, forming part of a flowing design, or decorated with leaf crowns or swelling horns, and associated with masks of animals and birds. The placing of this vital symbolic object on articles used in everyday life – personal ornaments, weapons, horse-trappings – would ensure protection from evil forces and assist in victory against opponents.

The evidence of the classical writers, and the major contribution made by archeology towards an understanding of the cult of the human head, is supported and enlarged by the written literatures and the folk traditions of the Celtic world. It is these references which make it possible to appreciate the overall nature of the significance the head possessed as a venerated object, by providing details of the various qualities with which it was believed to be imbued.

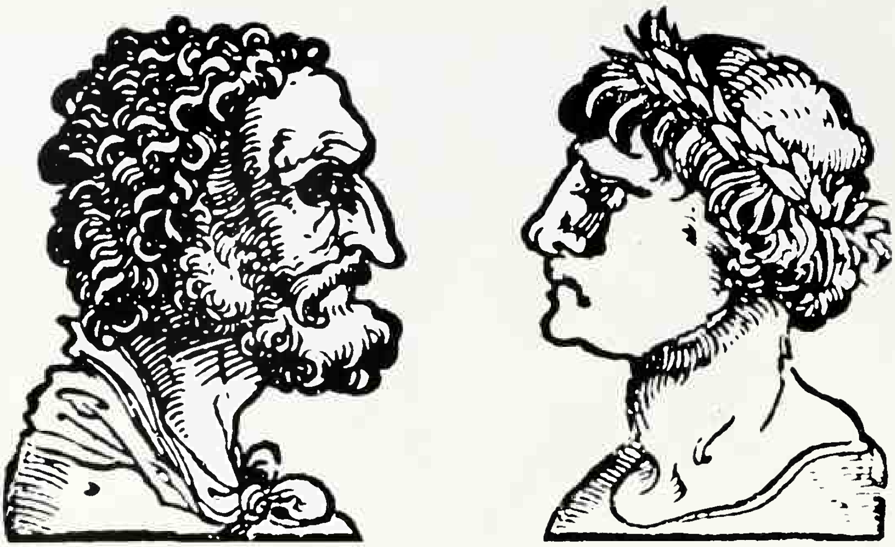
One of the most striking and convincing pieces of evidence for the role of the head in Celtic mythology occurs in a medieval Welsh tale in the *Mabinogion*. This concerns the magic head of Bran (see BRAN) who was clearly of divine origin. In the story his head, after his death, continues to live and remains uncorrupted, providing magnificent hospitality and entertainment in a magical realm until such time as Bran's followers ignore the warning he gave them before his death. All the magic then ends, and it remains for the head to be buried in the White Mount, in London. There it keeps at bay all plague and evil from the country. Its talismanic qualities cease when it is discovered and exhumed.

The Speaking Head

This tradition of a severed head presiding at a feast, or participating in festivities in this world or the next, is also found in the literature of early Ireland. The motif occurs in one of the tales connected with Finn (see FINN). Lomna, Finn's fool, chances upon Finn's wife in the act of committing adultery with a warrior, Coirpre. When Lomna informs his master of this association, Coirpre decapitates the fool in revenge and carries off his head. When Finn finds the decapitated corpse he puts his finger in his mouth, and thereby is able to divine whose body it is, for Finn has the power of supernatural knowledge. He goes in search of the head and comes upon Coirpre who is cooking a salmon, with Lomna's head stuck on a stake beside him. When the warrior is apportioning the fish he does not offer any to the head. The head speaks, but it still gets none. It speaks again, and Coirpre puts it outside the door. The fish is divided out once more, and when the head is again not given any it speaks from outside.

Heads are also associated with feasting in a story about the death of one of the Irish gods, Fothad Canainne, who was known as Caindia, 'Fair God'. The Celtic deities were not regarded as invulnerable. Fothad Canainne never sat down at a feast without having decapitated heads before him – this no doubt refers both to his prowess as a warrior as attested by these trophies, and also obviously points to the traditional association of severed heads with feasting and merry-making. Fothad's chief enemy is Ailill Flann Bec of Munster. Fothad desires his wife, and abducts her. In the resulting clash between the two warriors Fothad is worsted and falls, and Ailill decapitates him, according to custom. Fothad's mistress raises up his head which immediately chants a long poem to her, bewailing its condition and instructing her about future action.

Two essentially pagan traditions about the power of the severed human head occur in the tale of the battle of Almu (preserved in an 11th century Irish manuscript), in spite of the predominant Christian atmosphere and historical setting. Fergal Mac Maile Duin is slain while fighting against the Leinstermen. His head is taken to Cathal, king of the opposing side. A remarkable passage then occurs in the text, which



Illustrations showing the forehead of a vain man *(left)* and of a lustful man *(right)*: from Cocle's *Compendium of Physiognomy*, published in Strasbourg in 1533

tells how Cathal honours the head of his enemy; he has it washed and its hair braided, and he drapes it with a silk cloth. He then causes seven oxen and seven sheep and seven pigs to be cooked, and placed in front of the head – a strange reference to the actual veneration of a head. The Christian emphasis of the tale is reasserted when the head is made to blush and open its eyes and give thanks to God for the great honour and reverence shown to it.

The same tale contains another episode which illustrates an additional aspect of head worship that is well attested in the pagan tradition. Donn Bo, a youth who was renowned for the sweetness of his singing, was also killed in the battle, and decapitated. He had given his promise that he would sing that night for Fergal, no matter where they might be. One of the Leinstermen goes out onto the battlefield to take a head back to the feasting place. As he draws near he hears the severed heads entertaining the dead king. Donn Bo's voice is by far the sweetest. When the warrior goes to lift the head it protests, and says it is pledged to sing that night to Fergal alone. In spite of this the head is taken to the feasting hall and set upon a pillar. When requested to sing to the company it turns to the wall, so that it is in darkness, and then sings with moving sweetness. After this it is returned to the battlefield. Here again the head is alleged to be capable of independent movement, speech and powers of entertainment after its separation from the body.

The Well of the Heads

Wells and springs were of fundamental cult importance to the Celts and according to Celtic belief a sacred severed head, when brought into conjunction with a venerated well, increased the powers of both. The Church, instead of forbidding the continued worship of wells countenanced it, converting well-worship associated with pagan forces into well-worship presided over by saints, some of whom are the old deities thinly disguised. Thus, in the Christian context, the heads of saints rather than those of deities are connected with the sacred waters. Many sacred springs and sources have been found on excavation to contain, amongst other cult objects, one or more human skulls.

The earliest literatures, the lives of the Christian saints, and later Celtic folklore and tradition abound in references to the motif of severed heads in wells; and the amazing wealth of legends still current in Celtic-speaking parts of the British Isles indicates the fundamental character of this ancient concept. The firm belief in the curative powers of water drunk from the skull of an ancestor, especially in the case of epileptics, was still operative in the Scottish Highlands in the 20th century, and no doubt still lingers on in places.

A striking parallel to the Celtic material, and one which may owe its origin to a Celtic source, is that of the Old Norse tradition of Odin and the head of Mimir. Mimir's head was cut off by the Vanir (divine beings having powers of fertility). Odin took the head and preserved it with oils and herbs (as did the Celts) and kept it in a well. He recited magical charms over it, and it became capable of speech and obtained prophetic powers; and thereafter was a valuable source of information to the deity. Another tradition, this time preserved in an Elizabethan play, contains elements which again are purely Celtic in feeling. In Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* Zantippa goes to the Well of Life with a pitcher to draw water. As she is about to dip it into the water, a head rises above the surface and in true Celtic fashion speaks and makes meaningful statements. This is clearly connected with fertility and all the powers attributed to severed heads in Celtic mythology.

Many of the early Celtic saints are associated with such traditions. For example, St Melor of Cornwall and Brittany was murdered, and in the place where his assassin, who was carrying his head, almost died of thirst the head commanded him to strike his staff into the ground and a spring would appear. The staff grew into a fruit tree, and a holy well sprang from its roots. Like several other Celtic saints Melor was associated with healing springs over a wide territory; the powers of healing, prophecy and fertility believed to be inherent in the severed head were easily transferred into a Christian setting.

A story still current in the island of Vatersay, in the Outer Hebrides, contains all the ancient pagan elements. Three brothers are murdered and decapitated a a well known as *Tobar nan Ceann*, 'the Well of the Heads'. The father recovers the heads of his sons from the well, and makes for home to bury them. As he approaches a standing stone one of the heads speaks and makes a prophetic statement. A woman who is pregnant by this son at the time gives birth to a son; and as the head prophesied this boy in the fullness of time avenges his father. He decapitates the murderer as he bends over a well to drink He leaves the head in the well, which from then on is known as *Tobar a' Chinn*, 'the Well of the Head'.

Finally, a passage from a Scottish folk tale reveals the ancient belief in the powers of independent action and speech by severed heads. In the story of 'The Knight of the Red Shield' *(Gaisgeach na Sgeithe Deirge)*, 'One looked hither and one thither and they saw a head coming in a flame of fire and another head singing the song of songs A fist was struck on the door of the mouth of the king, and a tooth was knocked out of him. and there was no button of gold or silver on the coat of the king but showered off him with shame. The head did this three years after each other, and then it went home.'

All the evidence for Celtic religion emphasizes the fundamental importance of the human head to early Celtic society. It was a prized trophy in battle; but much more than this it was a potent symbol of the total religious attitudes of the Celtic peoples. The head stood for divinity. It was the supreme conveyer of hospitality, the distributor of the divine feast. It had powers of prophecy, healing, fertility, speech, independent movement and incorruptible life. It was regarded as the essence of being, the seat of the soul, the symbol of evil-averting divine power. Its meaning for the early Celtic peoples is clear throughout every phase of their history – it can truly be said to contain the essence of their religious philosophy and to be the most distinctive and powerful of all their cults.

(See also CULT OF THE DEAD; HAIR; HEAD-DRESS; MASKS; PHRENOLOGY; SKULL.)

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Routledge, 1967).

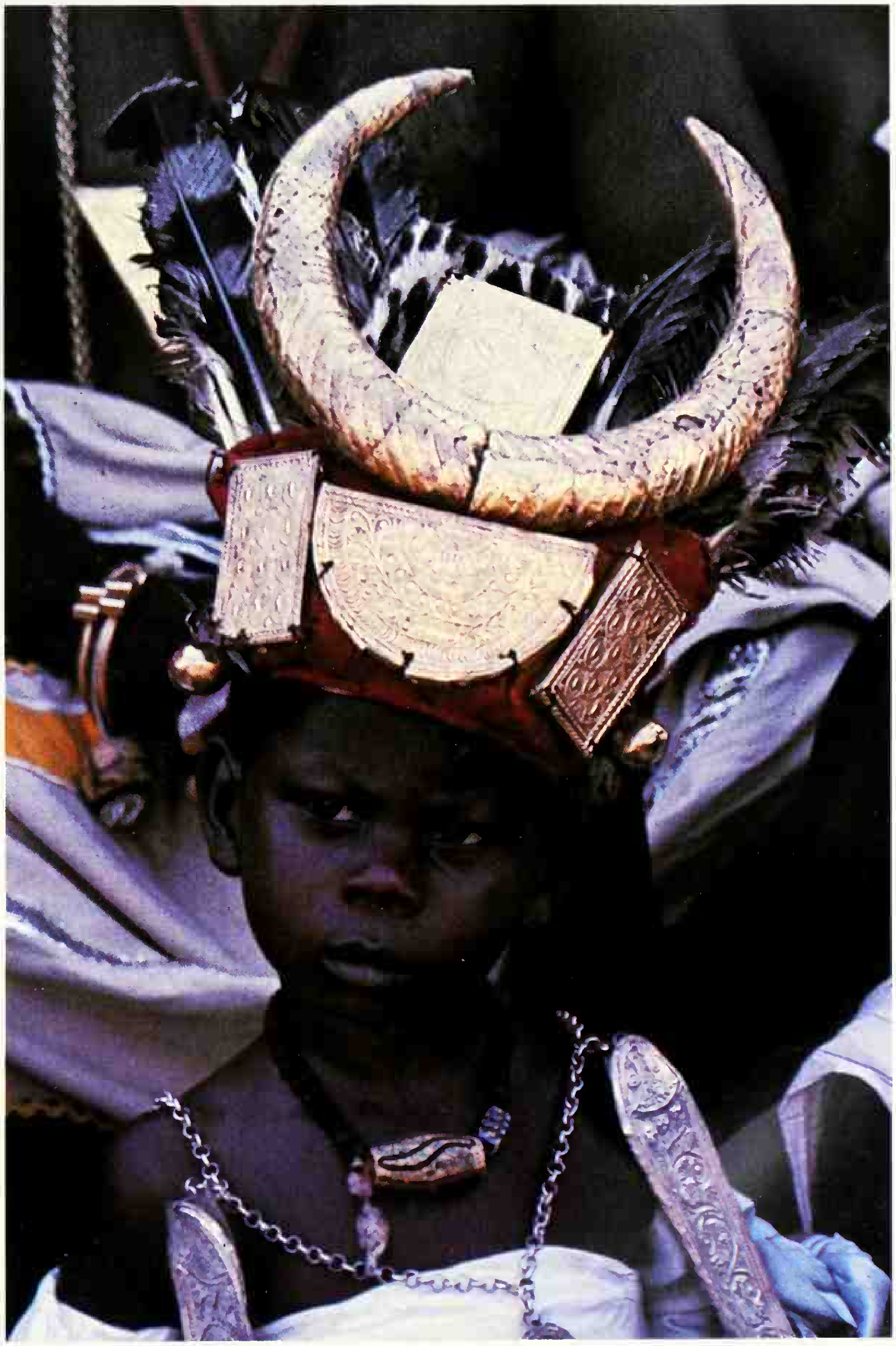
HEAD-DRESS

The impracticability of many types of military ieadgear reflects the fact that 'the element of nagic is never entirely absent' from head-dress

THE RATIONALISTIC NOTION that people out things on their heads to protect themselves against rain or sun is plainly an nadequate explanation of all the various xinds of headgear that have appeared in numan history. Other considerations must, rom the first, have entered into the matter. The desire to enhance the personality by naking oneself look taller is an obvious notive. The desire to adopt a badge of office, o express superior social status, the desire o frighten an enemy, to propitiate the gods, o frighten away evil spirits, to nullify the Evil Eye; all these have contributed to the size, shape, colour and decoration of the structures which men have put on their heads. The element of magic is never entirely absent, even in the case of modern hats.

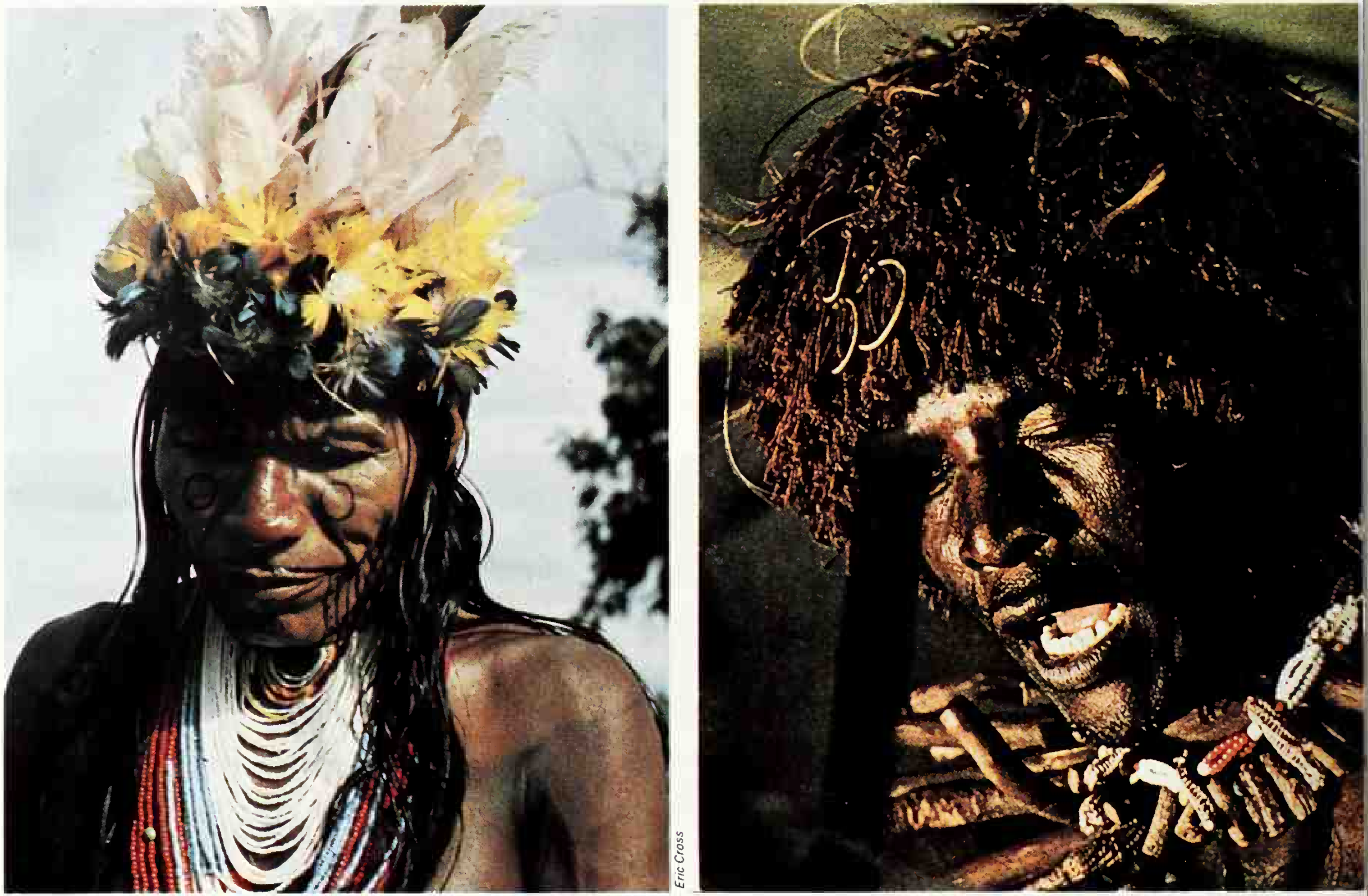
Not all peoples have at all times worn hats. The hats of the ancient Greeks were more in the nature of parasols, hats with very wide brims worn, for the most part, on the shoulder and only put on the head when the heat of the sun became oppressive. The Romans did not usually wear hats; they merely draped a fold of the toga over the head when in mourning or for some religious ceremony. The ancient Egyptians were content with a fold of cloth, or a wig, but the pharaoh wore a crown, or rather two crowns: the Crown of the North and the Crown of the South. These symbolized his rule over both parts of Egypt but they probably had a deeper significance for they form a perfect example of the *lingam* or union of the masculine and feminine principles. Almost all the deities in the Egyptian pantheon were provided with symbolic head-dresses: Isis had the sun disc between cow-horns, Thoth also had the disc between horns, Hathor had the disc between two feathers.

Crowns would seem, therefore, to have preceded hats in the modern sense and to have been worn for magical purposes. A



The notion that people wear hats for protection against the weather fails to explain the weirder kinds of headgear. Horned head-dresses are frequently meant to give the wearer the strength and virility of powerful horned animals like the bull: small boy of the Ashanti people of Ghana

Camera Press London/John Blumer



Eric Cross

Impressive headgear is particularly important to fighting men and priests, to instil power and frighten enemies, natural or supernatural. Some American Indians added a feather to a warrior's head-dress for each enemy he killed *(left)*: Caraja medicine-man of Brazil going into trance to cure a patient *(right)*

crown is merely the rim of a hat with neither top nor brim. It is a simple ring into which the wearer inserts his head. Freud maintains that every putting on of a hat is a symbolic coitus, and it seems likely that what the early kings were doing when they put on their crowns was to symbolize their mystical marriage to their people or to their land.

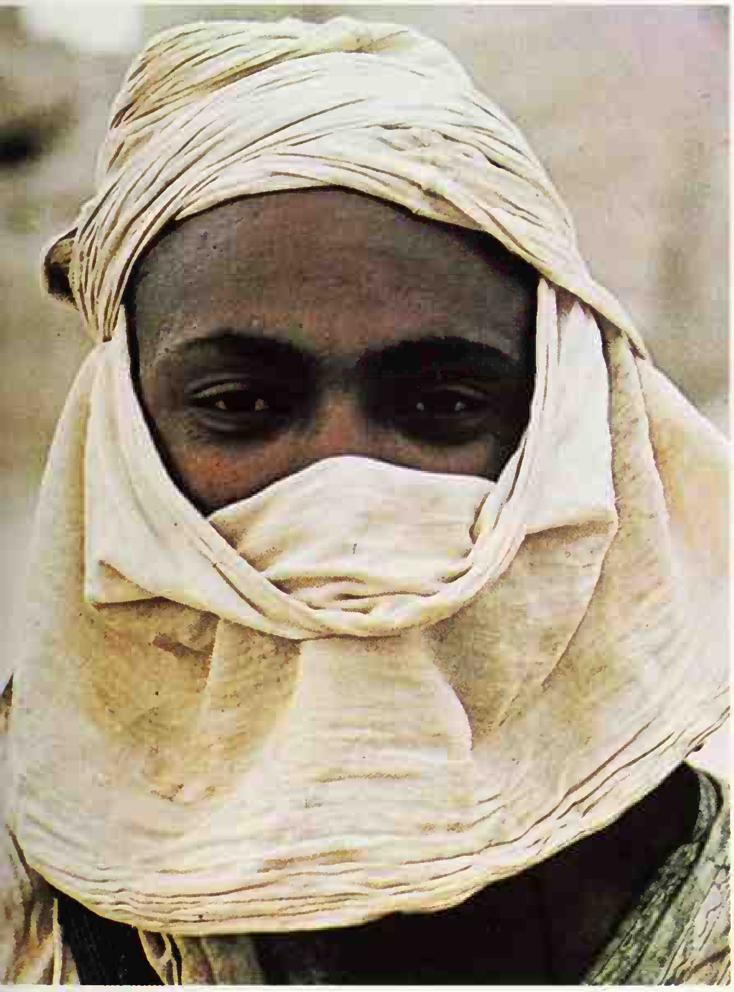
A special head-dress for priests is of immemorial antiquity. We learn from the Old Testament that Moses ordered the priests, and in particular the high priest, to wear a special kind of head-dress, but the Bible does not give a detailed description. However, the Jewish historian Josephus does describe the high priest's headgear at the beginning of our era. He tells us that it consisted of a band of material wound round the head and sewn to resemble a turban. Over this was another strip of finer material wound round it. Josephus also speaks of a bonnet of blue material encircled with a triple gold crown. In the front was a plaque, called the ziz, on which was inscribed the name of God.

The Fish and the Mitre

The early Christians adopted a headgear of their own which (except in the Armenian Church where all priests wore it) was reserved for bishops. The word *mitra*, or mitre, had in the beginning no particular liturgical significance, being worn also by women. It certainly took a long time to attain its final form, for when the tomb of St Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne in the 7th century, was opened his forehead was adorned merely with a gold circlet set with precious stones. It is difficult to determine exactly when this form of sacerdotal headgear was abandoned in favour of what is usually called a mitre. This was at first a kind of folding cap, the two sides lying flat when not worn. A mitre of this kind, reputed to have been worn by Thomas Becket, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. By the 12th century it had been assumed by all bishops of Western Europe as their proper liturgical head-dress. Mitres with peaks on either side were worn by the end of the 12th century but the custom grew up of wearing the peaks back and front, and it is this shape that has survived. What has happened, however, is that it has grown taller and fuller, reaching what is probably its final form in the 17th century. The curious thing is that this final form bears a close resemblance to the headgear of the priests of Dagon. Dagon was a Phoenician fish god and it is the head of a fish with open mouth that this ancient pagan headgear resembles. As such it conferred upon the celebrant the power of the god. It is at least curious that Christ was often, in early Christian times, symbolized by a fish.

There can be little doubt that in the 14th and 15th centuries there was a real witchcraft cult in Western Europe which involved not only the peasantry but some of the highest in the land, and there is a curious diabolism in the fashionable clothes of the time. It was indeed at this period that 'fashion' may be said to emerge. Between the fall of the Roman Empire and the mid-14th century there is hardly anything that could be called 'fashion' at all. And then, in a single generation, in the luxurious courts of France and Burgundy, and in England too, the scene was transformed. Instead of being clothed in shapeless garments which made it impossible to divine the body underneath, and with the head concealed by a veil, women began to exploit their natural charms. The three weapons of fashion were invented in a single generation and these were: tight-lacing, décolletage and elaborate head-dresses.

The veil, which had for so long been the only headgear allowed to women, suddenly began to take on, as it were, a life of its own. The coiffure consisted at this time of a kind of network studded with pearls and enclosing the hair, and from this by means of pins the veil was raised from the head. Moreover it began to be made of so fine a material as to be almost transparent with the result that, instead of concealing the head and part of the face, it drew attention to them. Various shapes were tried but the most popular was the horned head-dress, which immediately brought down upon its wearers accusations of immodesty and even of witchcraft. For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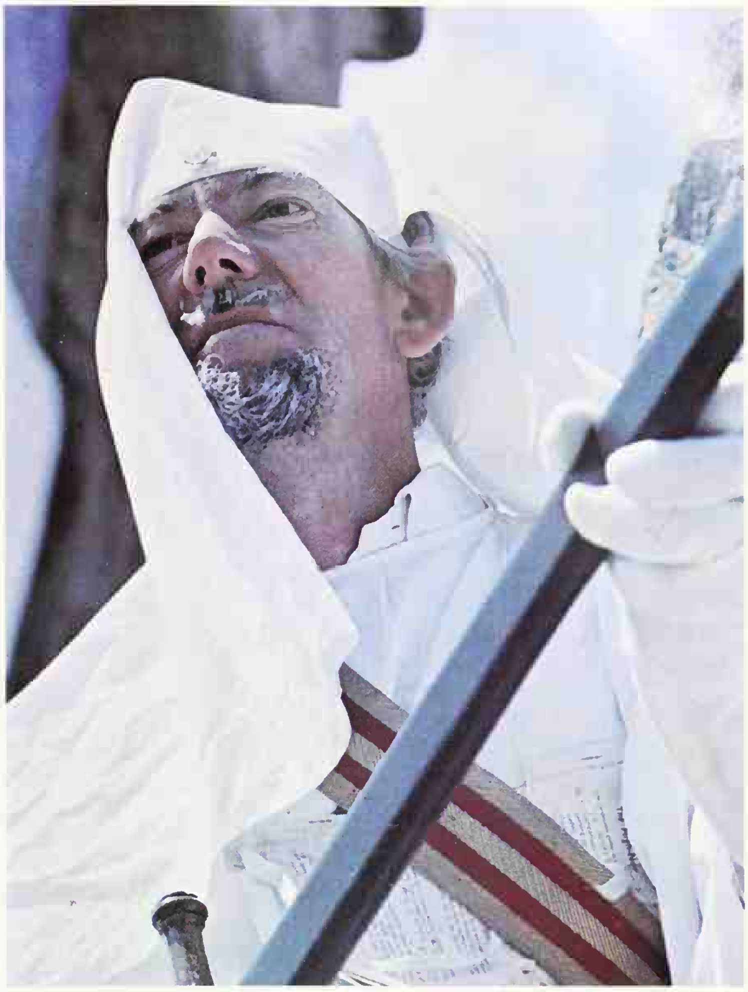

Homer Sykes

Womanish headgear on men *Left* **The veil gives the feared Touareg of the Sahara a highly sinister appearance** *Right* **Druid in ritual robes**

what did the horns signify if not an implied worship of the Devil? Certainly the clergy of the period thought so and the Archbishop of Paris even went so far as to offer indulgences to those who would insult women wearing the new head-dress in the street. The preaching friars took the same line and when, in the next century, the horned head-dress was replaced by a steeple-like structure not without phallic significance, the denunciations grew louder.

It is interesting that in men's clothes at his period the phallic significance is to be seen not in the headgear but in the footgear. The *cracawe* or *poulaine* shoe came to an elongated point in front and was some-imes actually formed in the shape of a phallus. These styles of women's head-dresses and men's shoes lasted until the second half of the 15th century.

Ferociously Virile

Something must be said of the magical element in soldiers' helmets. From the earliest times military headgear had been something more than defensive equipment for turning aside the stroke of an enemy's sword. It was also intended to make the wearer more imposing, and therefore more frightening, by increasing his apparent height (this motive being plain in all military headgear until modern times), to scare the enemy off by a ferocious appearance (the final example of this being the skull on the fur cap of the 'Death's Head Hussar') and to nullify the influence of the Evil Eye. This last desire perhaps explains the extraordinary prevalence of horns added to helmets, 'horns of power' being an accepted protection. Viking helmets are an obvious example.

Long after such considerations had ceased, or had sunk into the depths of the unconscious mind, soldiers' headgear continued to develop in a way which had nothing to do with efficiency in combat, and indeed was often hostile to it. It was of no advantage to a medieval knight (except perhaps for purposes of identification) that his helmet should be surmounted by an elaborate heraldic structure; and when we come to more recent times, we find the same principle at work.

Military uniform does not really come into being until the last quarter of the 17th century, and it is astonishing to find that it is much less suitable for its purpose than the clothes worn, for example, by the men who formed the armies of Cromwell. The sensible 'pot' or steel helmet was replaced by the three-cornered hat, difficult to keep in place during a charge, especially when placed on the top of a full-bottomed wig. The principle of utility did, however, impose itself on the dress of those of the infantry whose weapon was the grenade: the grenadiers. These men found it almost impossible to throw a grenade without knocking off their three-cornered hats. They were therefore provided with a soft cap rather like a nightcap. And then an extraordinary thing happened. It was as if the cap had been made of erectile tissue. It began to experience a kind of tumescence, to rise from the head, until it became the stiff mitre-cap to be seen, for example, in Hogarth's engraving of 'The March of the Guards to Finchley'. The behaviour of the later 'bearskin', still worn by the Guards when they parade in full dress, was even more extraordinary. The bearskin was originally a cap with a fur border, and this border gradually swallowed the rest of the structure, rising ever higher and higher until it was a third of the height of the whole body, was of great weight and could only with considerable difficulty be kept on the head.

A similar tendency can be observed in female head-dresses in the last quarter of the 18th century. At the beginning of the century there had been a high head-dress in the form of the *fontange*, but in the next generation this had disappeared in favour of a neat little coiffure like that worn by Madame de Pompadour. And then, in the late 1760s, women's hair began to rise from the head. By 1776 coiffures had attained the most astonishing proportions, sometimes rising to a yard in height. In its earliest form the head-dress consisted of a wire or other frame placed on the head. The natural hair was drawn over it, artificial hair was added, and the whole was adorned with colourful plumes and ribbons. The inconveniences of following such a fashion were considerable. Women going to court had to spend several hours with the coiffeur and

Transworld Features Syndicate

Left **The hoods of the Ku Klux Klan were worn to terrify**
Right **The bishop's mitre took centuries to reach its final form: whether deliberately or by chance it resembles the head of a fish, an early Christian symbol of Christ**

once erected, the structure often remained in place for weeks or even months making, one would have thought, natural sleep impossible. Another disadvantage was that the flour mixed with pomatum with which the hair was daubed formed an excellent breeding ground for lice.

Meanwhile men had abandoned the tricorne and assumed an early form of the top hat. In origin this had been a utilitarian hat, a hunting hat, with very narrow brims so as not to catch the wind when riding to hounds, and a very tall crown to serve, if the wearer was unhorsed, as a kind of primitive crash helmet. In the early 19th century it became the accepted town wear of the Regency dandies and for the rest of the century it was worn by men in all ranks of society.

It varied considerably in height and it has been suggested that it is possible to estimate the degree of male domination (if we accept the view that a high hat is an affirmation of virility) by noting its height. It would certainly seem that at the last high water mark of the patriarchal system (say, in the middle of the century) the top hat had an exalted crown. And then, with the emergence of the 'New Woman' in the 1880s men modified their pretensions and adopted the new low-crowned straw hat known as the 'gent's boater'. At the very end of the century came the Homburg hat, with its dented crown which, curiously enough if seen from above, is the very symbol of femininity; the 'yoni-on-top'. In our own day both men and women have largely abandoned hats altogether; and the astonishing implications, social, religious and magical which have been seen in the past in the headgear of both sexes, have finally faded away.

(See also COSTUME; CROWN; HORNS.)

JAMES LAVER

FURTHER READING: L. Langner, *The Importance of Wearing Clothes* (Hastings House, N.Y., 1959); M. Harrison, *The History of the Hat* (Herbert Jenkins, 1960).

The Cap of Liberty

A brief word on this hat (the Phrygian cap): made famous for us moderns when the first French Republic adopted it as the symbol of freedom. It provides us with a good example of how any ordinary useful object – in this case an ordinary working-cap – may be endowed with a symbolic character. 'The head-dress of the Persian Monarchs,' Layard wrote in his *Nineveh*, 'appears to have resembled the Phrygian Bonnet or the French Cap of Liberty.'

The cap of this particular type became the symbol of liberty because, when a Roman or Latin manumitted his slave, he made the man a present of a cap, as a symbol of the ex-slave's newly acquired freedom. And though hats were not generally worn by men in the Roman state – Servius considered it a matter of reproach to the Phrygians that they 'dressed like women', because they wore hats – a newly manumitted slave used to wear, for some time after his being freed, the cap which proved his rank of freeman.

Of course, it was because hats and caps had fallen out of use among the Romans that a cap – any cap – could acquire some symbolical value. In the countries where caps were worn, this type of cap had no other than a practical purpose; and before the Greeks gave up wearing hats, the Phrygian cap was to be seen, along with a number of other basic types.

Michael Harrison *The History of the Hat*

HEADLESS SPIRITS

THE IMPORTANCE of the head in the constitution of the body is obvious, and from the earliest times a unique significance has been accorded to it in myth and ritual magic (see HEAD). Conversely, headlessness has been regarded as a baleful state of being and has inspired some strange and eerie conceptions.

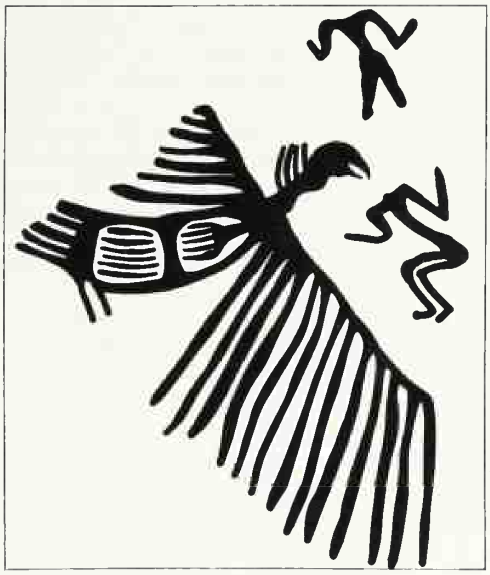
In the later Paleolithic era, at Mineteda in eastern Spain, headless human figures were engraved on rocks. They are depicted in upright posture and apparently in movement, and have been interpreted as representations of spirits. Possibly the horror of a decapitated body prompted the fear that the decapitated dead would be especially baleful and vindictive towards the living.

A different significance seems to attach to the depictions of headless persons in the remarkable mural paintings found recently at Catal Hüyük in Anatolia. At the Neolithic settlement on this site, which dates back to the 7th millennium BC, the ruins of a shrine dedicated to a goddess were excavated. From various objects found there, it is evident that this goddess was connected with both fertility and death. Among the frescoes which adorned the shrine were pictures of great black birds, of horrific appearance, menacing decapitated bodies. These depictions have generally been interpreted as representing vultures preying on human corpses. But there are reasons for doubting this interpretation. In the first place, such a subject would seem to have no relevance, and also to be inappropriate, to the cult of a mother goddess. Then there is the problem of the headlessness of the corpses – if indeed they are corpses; for they appear very animated in their postures. Since both human and vulture skulls were found specially deposited in the sanctuary, it would seem that the headless bodies have some hidden meaning beyond our knowing (see also HELL).

In ancient Egypt the famous mortuary god Osiris (see OSIRIS) could be conceived of as 'the headless one' for, according to his legend, his murderer Seth mutilated his body. His severed head was subsequently recovered and buried at Abydos, which became the chief cult-centre of Osiris. But in ancient Egyptian inconography, Osiris is never depicted as headless (except in bas-relief at Philae where his headless corpse is the subject of a magical ceremony). The whole purpose of the Osirian mortuary ritual was, on the contrary, to ensure the complete re-constitution and eternal preservation of the body of the deceased, with emphasis upon the security of the head.

However, in Greek magical papyri of Egyptian origin Osiris became 'the strong Headless One', the 'Creator of Heaven and Earth, Day and Night, Light and Darkness', 'the Lightener and Thunderer', 'the God who holds the eternal Fire' (meaning the sun). He is also referred to as the 'good Osiris, who no one has seen with eyes'. This mysterious being, called in the Greek text *Akephalos* ('Headless'), is imagined as having a head and face at his feet, and a mouth burning with fire. In two magical papyri of the period (now at Oslo and Berlin respectively), fantastic representations are given of headless monsters, showing some distorted remembrance of Egyptian symbols. There may also be some connection in this strange and horrific imagery with the fact that the first decan god of the constellation Capricorn, in the Egyptian star-map, was shown as headless. (The decans are divisions of the zodiac signs.) This decan god was associated also with the incidence of fever. The association is particularly interesting, since there is other evidence connecting headless spirits with disease and its cure.

A large black bird threatens headless bodies on this fresco from the shrine of a mother goddess at Catal Huyuk



E. A. Lowcock/University of Manchester

Another class of headless spirits were the ghosts of those who died by decapitation, and were in consequence restless and haunted the living. A similar belief existed in connection with those who had been hanged or crucified. The folklore of many northern peoples contain instances of such belief, of which the well-known idea of the decapitated ghost, holding its head under its arm is a romanticized version. It is interesting to note also that the Nordic god Wotan, in one of his manifestations, was the 'headless rider on the white horse'.

The medieval English Romance of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see GAWAIN) which is related to the Arthurian cycle of legends, contains a remarkable episode of the beheading of a being who continues to live on headless. It seems likely that the 'beheading game' in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* preserves some reminiscence of ancient Celtic religion in which ritual decapitation and a cult of severed heads were practised.

Headless deities and heroes are also known in India. In the Hindu *Markandeya Purana*, the goddess Devi assumed the form of Chhinnamastaka (the 'Headless'), in order to destroy the demon Nisumbha. In the Punjab, at Bahraich, where his headless body was buried Ghazi Salar is venerated as a headless champion of Islam. The headless trunk of Lakkhe Shah Darwesh is fabled to have fought its way to Ambala, to curse the wells there with brackishness. At Panipat, the Binsira was a 'headless saint' of the Hindus.

Medieval Christian art graphically contributed to the imagery of the headless dead. The legends of many saints told of their martyrdom by beheading; in consequence they were sometimes depicted headless and holding their heads as, for example, St Nicasius is represented in the sculptures of the Cathedral of Rheims.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Many successful cures at the shrines of Asclepios were effected by dreams – an early example of what we now call psychosomatic medicine, the healing of the body through the mind

HEALING GODS

THE MOST FAMOUS healing god of classical antiquity was the Greek Asclepios (the Roman form of his name was Aesculapius) who was at first a divine being of the second rank, not a great Olympian god like his father Apollo. For that reason alone he was closer to mortals than the great gods and more concerned with their affairs, but he was closer still because his special province was the art of healing. In his relations with his worshippers or patients he showed many of the traits of a good human physician, and he was consulted on many other problems of life beyond those arising from sickness. He also sometimes punished presumptuous or deceitful patients.

The Epidaurian *Iamata* or 'cures' are records of cures and miracles at the god's great temple at Epidaurus in southern Greece. They were inscribed on tablets along the inner wall of the colonnade, on the north side of the sacred enclosure. Six tablets alone remained in the time of the famous traveller Pausanias (2nd century AD) but earlier there must have been more. This building was designed for those who came to sleep and to be cured. Its inscriptions, like those at many other centres, were an official compilation by the priesthood, written to maintain belief and awe.

The Epidaurian 'cures' are not written in any classified order and the more extraordinary acts and events often burst upon the reader without warning. Pandarus of Thessaly suffered from a mark on his forehead. Asclepios, appearing in a dream, put a bandage round his head, which he was to take off when the god had gone. When Pandarus did take off the bandage, he found the marks transferred to it. Echedorus, who had a similar mark, was sent by Pandarus to pay over money for a statue of Athene to be put in the shrine. When Asclepios appeared and asked about the money, Echedorus denied receiving it but promised to paint a picture and dedicate it. Asclepios bound Pandarus' bandage round Echedorus' head; when he woke and took it off, Echedorus found no marks on the bandage, but on his own forehead the marks of Pandarus added to his own.

Euhippus, who had a spear point embedded in his jaw, was cured in his sleep by the god, who drew it out and left carrying the point. A man with an ulcer on his toe was cured in his sleep when one of the sacred snakes licked it. In his dream he had seen his toe treated with a remedy by a handsome youth. When Arata of Laconia had dropsy, her mother slept at Epidaurus for her. The mother dreamed that Asclepios cut off her daughter's head, emptied out the liquid and then replaced the head. The daughter had the same dream, and had recovered when her mother returned. Clinatas of Thebes was cured of lice when Asclepios in a dream swept him down with a stiff broom.

These are some of the more unusual tales among much more ordinary cures. It is not always possible to see what happened in dream and what in the waking state. It seems to have been assumed that operations seen in dreams were done on some sort of ghostly counterpart of the body, and took effect on the actual body.

Diary of a Hypochondriac

The curious case of Aelius Aristides in the 2nd century AD is described in the *Hieroi Logoi* or 'Sacred Tales', which Aristides himself wrote by compiling a diary of his experiences. He became a permanent invalid or hypochondriac after the rigours of a journey across the Balkans to the Adriatic and to Rome, undertaken in midwinter. On his return in very poor health to his house at Smyrna, he was summoned in a dream to become a patient and devotee of Asclepios in the great shrine at Pergamum (now Bergama) in Asia Minor where, in the intervals of sickness and cures, he lived a zealous literary life.

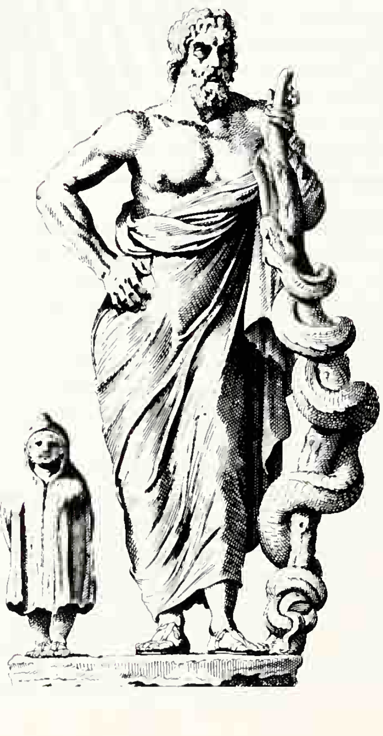
Aristides was hysterical, and no unified diagnosis of his various ailments seems possible, but he was as tough as only a chronic invalid can be. He was afflicted with periodic paralysis, convulsions and difficulties in breathing, in combinations characteristic of hysteria. Asclepios prescribed not only baths and special food but also long periods of fasting without washing, which left Aristides extremely thin and exhausted under his blankets, especially as they were sometimes accompanied by emetics, and by constant purges and blood-lettings. In the throes of these ailments, and of this treatment, he was from time to time ordered in midwinter to run naked round the sacred enclosure and to take plunges in frozen rivers and lakes. He survived each ordeal in triumph, when physicians and friends expected him to fall into convulsions. When Aristides accepted human doctoring, the god was liable to punish him with deadly chills, catarrh and digestive disorders. He lived thus for 17 years, making occasional excursions from Pergamum, while Asclepios arranged for the defeat of his literary rivals, for his winning the imperial favour, for his escape from punishment when he was charged with not carrying out official duties required by the Roman authorities, and for his preservation in time of plague.

According to Homer, Asclepios belonged to Tricca in Thessaly, and it is agreed that his first cult was there. He was the son of the nymph Coronis and the god Apollo, who among his other attributes had powers of causing health or sickness. While she was still pregnant with Asclepios, Coronis took a mortal lover. Apollo in his anger sent the goddess Artemis to slay Coronis and many of her neighbours with her shafts, which could be a mythological way of describing an epidemic. As Coronis lay dead upon a burning pyre, Apollo snatched their baby son from her body and gave him to Chiron, the centaur, to rear and to instruct in medicine. Asclepios grew up to be a famous healer, but overstepped the mark when he brought a man back from the dead. For this, Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt.

But after his mortal life, Asclepios became a famous hero in the full Greek sense, one of the mighty dead who received cult. In time his status gradually rose until he became greater than ordinary heroes and took rank first as a minor god and later even as one of the great gods.

His cult spread southward, from c 600 BC onward, and its most famous centre was at Epidaurus. The remains of the ancient precinct with its temple, theatre, stadium and other buildings, are well known to tourists. The cult also reached the island of Cos in the eastern Aegean, though the great shrine there is of later origin. It was introduced in some form at Athens in 420 BC by the dramatist Sophocles who for a time housed one of the sacred snakes.

Below **The chief healing god of antiquity, Asclepios or Aesculapius, with his staff and sacred snake. Beside him is the little god of convalescence, Telesphoros. Patients came to sleep at his shrines and were cured in dreams** ***Right*** **Aesculapius and Chiron the Centaur hand Plato a book on herbal medicine: from an English 11th century manuscript. In mythology it was Chiron who instructed the young Aesculapius in medicine**



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Rome, Shrines and Snakes

The Roman cult of Aesculapius began in consequence of a mission in 292 BC, which sought deliverance from a plague and was advised by the Delphic Oracle to go to Epidaurus. When it arrived, an immense serpent glided down from under the base of the great statue of Asclepios. Turning its head from time to time as it went, as if to bid farewell, it boarded the Roman ship and coiled itself up under a tent. On the voyage it swam ashore at Antium, where it hung from a tree for three days before it came aboard again. As the ship sailed up the Tiber, the serpent went ashore on Tiber Island and disappeared. The plague immediately came to an end. At this spot the Roman temple of Aesculapius was founded.

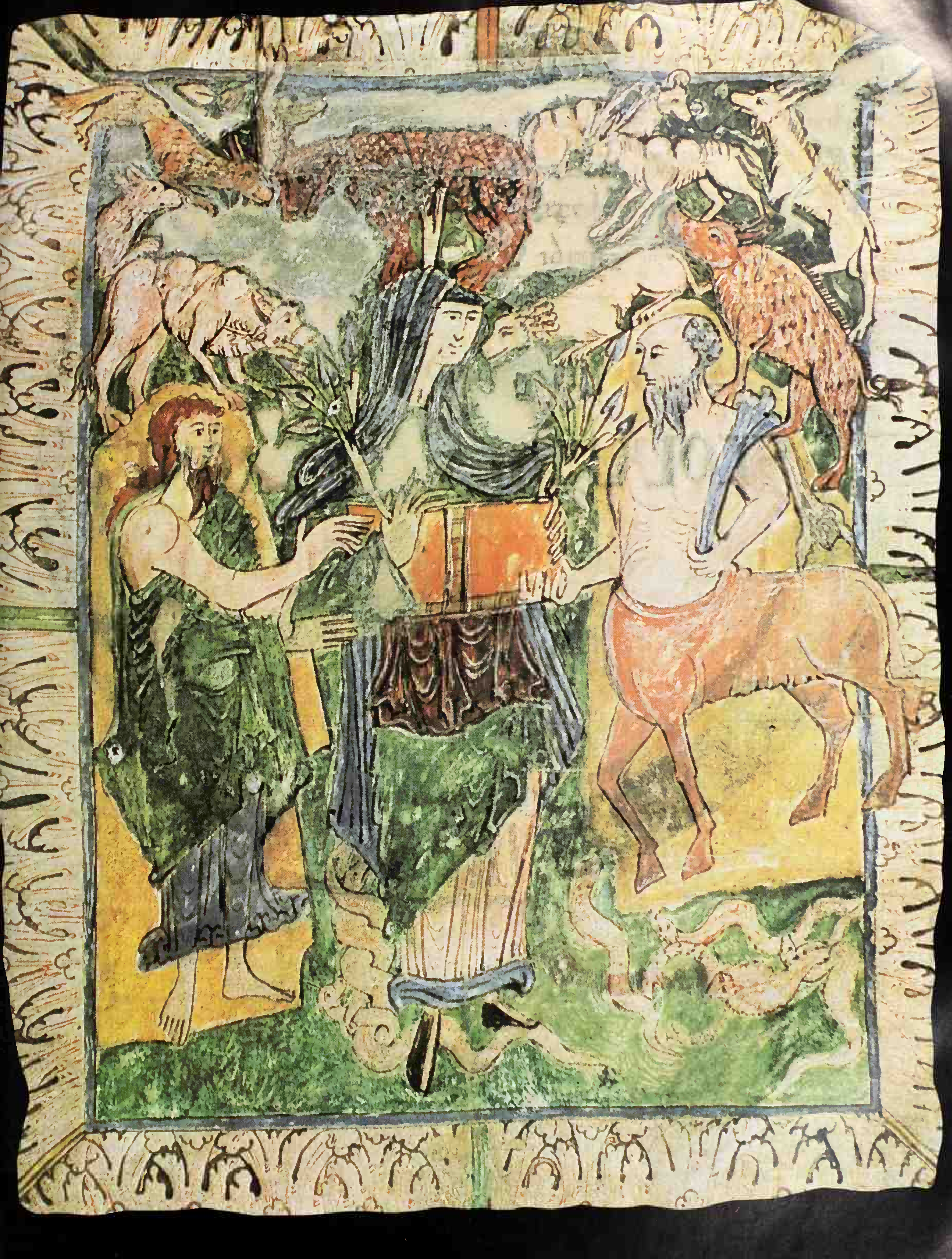
The shrines of Asclepios at Epidaurus, Cos, Pergamum and elsewhere were elaborate combinations of a hospital and its grounds with something like a cathedral precinct. They contained long colonnades or peristyles where the patients or devotees slept, springs, baths and groves of trees, usually cypresses. There were temples, often more than one, of Asclepios and other gods, and great altars open to the sky. At Epidaurus there was a renowned theatre; at Pergamum there was a library for the wealthy and cultured patients. Beside the sacred snakes, for which such places as the labyrinth under the round temple at Epidaurus were intended as pits, there were also sacred dogs.

The statues of Asclepios were usually of a grave bearded man of middle age, often with a curiously distant look in the uplifted eyes. Occasionally there were contrasted statues of a youthful Asclepios. Most often, he was shown seated on a throne attended by his great snakes, executed in bronze. The whole of each shrine had a well-marked boundary, within which neither birth nor death was permitted to happen. Very often the sites were on hillsides exposed to the sun and health-giving breezes, like our sanatoria for the tuberculous.

The cures, whether by Asclepios or by saints of later times, were not brought about by the known methods of clinical medicine and surgery. The decisive element was the direct power of the god, which was felt in a psychic manner. Much illness is now recognized to be psychosomatic, showing physical symptoms but originating from mental causes.

Dreams and Visions

Many other supernatural beings, whether gods or heroes, were approached for help in healing. Apollo, who was famous for sending plague on offenders, was also a healer. Connected with Apollo was Paieon or Paian, who may have been the personification of a song called *paian* (our 'paean')



which was originally a healing song but was also a song of victory, not only over disease but over other afflictions and perils.

As the popularity of Asclepios grew steadily in the later centuries of antiquity, so did the vogue of the alien Isis and Serapis (or Sarapis), until these divinities too were overcome by Christ and his saints. Isis was believed to sustain the vigour of the healthy and to give health to the sick, particularly in diseases of the eye. At some of her shrines, especially in Egypt, the sick took up residence by her command to be healed, usually by visions in which she performed miracles or gave instructions.

Even in ancient times the origin of Serapis was a little mysterious. It was said that Ptolemy I (3rd century BC), soon after establishing his rule in Egypt, saw the god in a dream and was ordered to fetch his image (apparently a Greek statue of Pluto) from Sinope on the coast of the Black Sea and establish it in Alexandria as a blessing to the realm. When Ptolemy delayed, Serapis appeared again in a more threatening manner, so that the king in alarm had the image fetched and installed with due pomp in the new Serapeum in Alexandria.

The Graeco-Egyptian god Serapis healed the sick through dreams and visions. In spite of poverty, discomforts and quarrels, some patients could not tear themselves away from the shrine until the god ordered them to go, a striking demonstration of the strength of the faith which made the cures effective: Roman head of Serapis

G. Drury/Guildhall Museum

Like Asclepios, Serapis appeared in dreams and visions to heal those who slept in his temples. At Memphis and elsewhere he had a class of resident devotees who were in a state called *katoche*, which seems to have meant that they were detained by the inner compulsion of the god's command until he should let them go. Papyri have been discovered which show their uncomfortable and poverty-stricken condition, and their bitter quarrelling with one another, with the priests and with the population.

Another healing god was Imouthes, who was originally a real person, an Egyptian royal official named Imhotep. After his death he was credited with all manner of wisdom, especially in medicine, and he rose to the rank of a god. He was one of a circle of deities worshipped with Serapis at Memphis, where he had his own shrine. A papyrus of the 2nd century AD tells how the writer, who had delayed translating into Greek a book on the miracles of Imouthes, was punished with a high fever. The god appeared to him, holding a book and saying no word but merely looking at him. The patient then broke into a sweat and was cured of his fever.

Most of the shrines of these gods had special quarters where the devotee-patients could sleep or even spend periods of many weeks. Those of Asclepios were famous for their buildings, gardens, springs and baths laid out in the most elegant Greek style. Those of Serapis and other such gods were no doubt less agreeable. The Serapeum papyri from Egypt give a picture of uncomfortable and crowded rooms which were sometimes open to outsiders but sometimes walled off so that the inmates could communicate with others only through a small window.

The practice of incubation, as this 'sleeping in' is called, cannot be traced to any one place of origin. It would arise in any community which had great faith in dreams and visions to be received only on holy ground. It is a feature of old Japanese religion also, where no influence from western Asia or Europe need be assumed. The basis is entirely in faith healing and trust in supernatural beings, whose orders must be obeyed however paradoxical they seemed, both in medical treatment and often in the conduct of life in general. The divine healers, like human physicians and psychiatrists, might be consulted on any matter which had a deeply emotional significance for the worshipper.

(See also IMHOTEP; ISIS; SERAPIS.)

E. D. PHILLIPS

FURTHER READING: E. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius* (Arno, 1976 – two volumes) contains many of the cures; C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Hakkert, 1968) contains the diary of Aristides; C. Kerenyi, *Asklepios* (Thames & Hudson, 1960) makes speculative use of Jungian theories. See also W. A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations* (AMS Press reprint).